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THE SHAHNAMA OF FIRDAUSI.

Done into English by

ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.
AND
EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

The year A.D. 1010 saw the completion of the Sháhnáma, the great Persian epic. Its author, the poet Firdausi, spent over thirty laborious years in its composition, only to experience, when the task had been achieved, a heart-breaking disappointment well worthy of inclusion in any record of the calamities of authors. His work has survived the test of time, and by general consent is accounted to be one of the few great epics of the world. Geographically, and in some other respects, it may be said to stand half-way between the epics of Europe and those of India. In its own land it has no peer, while in construction and subject-matter it is unique. Other epics centre round some heroic character or incident to which all else is sub servient. In the Sháhnáma there is no lack either of heroes or of incidents, but its real hero is the ancient Persian people, and its theme their whole surviving legendary history from the days of the First Man to the death of the last Sásánian Sháh in the middle of the seventh century of our era. It is the glory of the Persian race that they alone among all nations possess such a record, based as it is on their own traditions and set forth in the words of their greatest poet. In another sense, too, the Sháhnáma is unique. The authors of the other great epics tell us little or nothing of their own personalities or of their sources of information. Their works are fairy palaces suspended in mid air ; we see the result, but know not how it was achieved. The author of the Sháhnáma takes us into his confidence from the first, so that in reading it we are let into the secret of epic-making, and can apply the knowledge thus gained to solve the problem of the construction of its great congeners. To the student of comparative mythology and folk-lore, to the lover of historic romance or romantic history, and to all that are fond of tales of high achievements and the gests of heroes, the Sháhnáma is a storehouse of rich and abundant material. To set forth a complete presentation of it with the needful notes and elucidations is the object of the present translation, made from two of the best printed texts of the original—that of Vullers and Landauer, and that of Turner Macan.

THE
SHĀHNĀMA OF FIRDAUSI

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY
ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.,
AND
EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

*"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry."* FIRDAUSI.

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THE SHĀHNAMA

ABBREVIATIONS

C.	—Macan's edition of the Sháhnáma	
L.	—Lumsden's	do.
P.	—Mohl's	do.
T.	—Tíhrán	do.
V.	—Vullers'	Do.
BPB.	Photius: <i>Bibliotheca</i> .	Ex recensione Immanuelis Bekkeri.
CMN.	Magic in Names.	By Edward Clodd.
CTC.	Theophanis <i>Chronographia</i> .	Ex Recensione Ioannis Classeni.
GDF.	The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.	By Edward Gibbon, Esq. With Notes by Dean Milman and M. Guizot. Edited, with additional Notes, by William Smith, LL.D.
MM.	Maçoudi: <i>Les Prairies d'Or</i> .	Texte et Traduction par C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille.
NIN.	Das Iranische Nationalepos von Theodor Nöldeke.	
NT.	Geschichte der Perser und Araber sur Zeit der Sasaniden von Th. Nöldeke.	
PCHAP.	History of Art in Persia from the French of Georges Perrot, and Charles Chipiez	
RK.	The Koran: Translated . . . by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell, M.A.	
RM.	The Rauzat-us-safa; or, Garden of Purity. . . . By Mirkhond. . . . Translated . . . by E. Rehatsek.	
RSM.	The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy.	By George Rawlinson, M.A.
SK.	The Koran. . . . Translated . . . by George Sale, Gent.	
ZT.	Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mo'hammed-Ben-Djarir-Ben-Yezid-Tabari, traduite . . . Par M. Hermann Zotenburg.	

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

a as in "water"

i as in "pique"

ü as in "rude"

a as in "servant"

i as in "sin"

u as in "foot"

ai as in "time"

au as in *ou* in "cloud"

g is always hard as in "give"

kh as *ch* in the German "buch"

zh as *z* in "azure"

IV

THE SĀSĀNIAN DYNASTY
(Continued)

PART V

THE FALL AND RESTORATION TO FAVOUR OF BÚZURJMIHR, AND THE WISDOM OF NÚSHÍRWÁN

ARGUMENT

Búzurjmihr, while in attendance upon the Sháh during a hunting-expedition, has a premonition of coming trouble and immediately afterwards falls under the Sháh's displeasure, and is disgraced. Conscious of his own rectitude he refuses to own that he is in fault and is treated with increasing rigour till the Sháh has need of his services to expound a problem proposed by Cæsar, but with his sight greatly impaired by his sufferings.

The rest of the Part is taken up with an account of the wisdom of Núshírwán as shown in his replies to questioners and in his letter of advice to his son Hurmuzd.

NOTE

§ 2. We have other instances of such problems and “hard questions.” See Vol. vii., p. 5.

§§ 3 and 5. On Persian Wisdom-literature see Vol. vii., p. 278 *seq.*

§ 4. It is manifest from the account in the Sháhnáma, and it is probably true historically, that Núshírwán did his best to provide himself with a worthy successor.¹ In addition to this letter of counsel we have in Part VI. the account of the examination that his son Hurmuzd had to pass,² and some final exhortations.³ Unfortunately

“ The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men
Gang aft a-gley.”

¹ Cf. NT. p. 252 and *note*.

² p. 57.

³ p. 61.

§ 1

How Núshírwán was wroth with Búzurjmihr and ordered him to be put in Ward

Consider now the case of Búzurjmihr,
Who from the dust rose to the circling sphere,
Which will exalt one to the clouds on high,
Then bring him down in sorry dust to lie !¹

It happened in those days that Núshírwán
Went forth from Madá'in to hunt. He chased
Along the wilderness the mountain-sheep
And the gazelles. The mountain-sheep dispersed.
The Sháh was left behind with Búzurjmihr,
Who followed both from duty and from love.
Then from the waste the monarch reached a meadow,
And saw trees, grass, and shade. The weary Sháh
Alighted from his steed to rest his eyes
Upon the grass. He saw no followers ;
The one of goodly face remained, no more.
The Sháh reposed awhile upon the mead,
His head right lovingly upon the lap
Of Búzurjmihr. It was that wise king's wont
To wear a jewelled armlet. As it chanced
This clinging armlet snapped upon his arm,
And fell beside his couch. A sable bird
Swooped from the clouds to where he lay, looked
round,
Beheld that armlet, brake the thread whereon
The gems were strung, then ate them each in turn,
The lustrous pearls and topazes alike,
Flew from the monarch's couch, and disappeared.
At that adventure Búzurjmihr aghast
Mused at the process of the turning sky.

¹ Two couplets omitted.

He understood : “ My fall, my day of wrath,
My season of dismay, are hard at hand ! ”

The Sháh awoke, marked how he bit his lips,
Scanned his own arm, beheld the jewels gone,
And seeing no one of his escort there¹
Conceived that while he slumbered Búzurjmihr²
Had gulped the armlet down, and said to him :—
“ Thou dog ! who said to thee : ‘ ‘Tis possible
To hide one’s natural bent ? ’ ”³

But Núshírwán

C. 1752

Fatigued with many words his tongue in vain ;
He got no answer but a deep, cold sigh,
While Búzurjmihr stood withered by the Sháh,
And by the process of revolving heaven.
That wise man marked at once the ominous sign
Of downfall and remained struck dumb by fear.
The escort of the Sháh had gone about
The mead while Núshírwán was in its midst.
He mounted on his charger’s back in wrath,
And noticed no one on his journey home,
But bit his lip at Búzurjmihr the while,
And muttering much alighted from his steed,
Bade smite the sage’s face as ‘twere an anvil,
And to imprison him in his own palace.
So Búzurjmihr abode there and beheld
A frowning sky. He had a kinsman, brave
And young, attending on Sháh Núshírwán
Within the palace day and night on terms
Of intimacy. Búzurjmihr one day
Asked that dependant of the sun-faced Sháh :—
“ How dost thou wait upon him ? Let me know
So that thou mayest be more serviceable.”
“ Chief of archmages ! ” said the servitor,
“ It chanced this very day that Núshírwán

¹ Couplet inserted from P.

² Reading with P.

³ Couplet omitted.

Looked so on me, his bondslave, that I said :—
 ‘There is an end for me of food and sleep !’
 I poured the water for him after meat,
 Transgressing with the basin in the act,
 And when the world-lord was offended at me
 I let the basin fall.”

Then said the sage :—

“Arise ! Fetch hither water and pour out
 As thou wouldest pour it o'er the Sháh's own
 hands.”

The young man brought warm water which he
 poured

Upon the sage's hands with gentleness,
 Who said : “Pour thus when he requireth it,
 Avoiding any awkwardness, and when
 The water shall perfume the basin's brim
 Forbear to pour.”

The servitor took heed,

And on the next occasion, when he brought
 The salver, poured the water as the sage
 Enjoined with neither tardiness nor haste.
 “O thou whose love increaseth !” said the Sháh,
 “Who told thee this ?”

He answered : “Búzurjmíhr,
 For he it was that taught to me the mode
 Marked by the Sháh, the master of the world.”

The Sháh said : “Go and say thus to the sage :—
 ‘With all that high estate of thine and lustre
 Why didst thou seek the worse and not the better
 Through thine ill nature and misgovernance ?’”

The attendant heard and coming quickly sought
 The palace eagerly with stricken soul,
 Gave Búzurjmíhr the message of the Sháh,
 And privily received this answer back :—
 “My station both in public and in private
 Far bettereth the monarch of the world's.”

The servitor returned with this response,
But counted as he went the grains of dust.
The answer made the Sháh exceeding wroth.
He had the sage bound in a dismal dungeon,
And asked the servitor the second time :—
“ How beareth that insensate one his lot ? ”

The messenger came with a tearful face,
And told the words to Búzurjmihr who thus
Made answer to that faithful friend of his :—
“ My days are passed more lightly than the Sháh’s.”

The messenger turned back, came like the wind,
And told the Sháh that answer, which enraged him ;
He was as ‘twere a pard and bade to make
A narrow iron cage, then studded it
With spikes and nails inside, and set thereon
Withal an iron lid. Thus Búzurjmihr
Could neither rest by day nor sleep by night.
Thus for the fourth time to the servitor
The Sháh said : “ Take this message and bring back
His answer. Say to him : ‘ How far’st thou now,
Environed as thou art by piercing nails ? ’ ”

The attendant came and gave the message sent
By that imperious prince. Thus Búzurjmihr
Made answer to the youth : “ My days are better
Than those of Núshírwán.”

Now when the man
Returned with this reply the Sháh’s face grew
All livid at the words. Out of the palace
He chose a truthful man and capable
Of comprehending what the sage should say,
Dispatched too with the messenger a swordsman,
Who acted as the executioner,
And said : “ Go to this bad, ill-fortuned man,
And say : ‘ If thy reply give pleasure, well ;
If not the deathsman with his trenchant sword
Shall show thee Doomsday in that thou hast said

That jail and nails and cage, and pit and bonds
Are better than the throne of Núshírwán.'"

The envoy came apace to him and told
The words of Núshírwán. Said Búzurjmíhr
To that good envoy : " Fortune ne'er hath shown us
Its face. None of us is exempt from change,
And verily all good and ill will end.
Enthroned and rich or grievously oppressed,
We have no choice, we all must pack and part.
To pass from durance is an easy thing ;
The quaking is for them that wear the crown."

That wise man and the executioner
Returned and, coming to the exalted Sháh,
Narrated everything that they had heard.
The fear of evil fortune came upon him.
They bore that righteous guide from that strait cage
Back to his palace with the Sháh's consent,
And heaven turned awhile with matters thus,
While wrinkles filled the face of Búzurjmíhr,
His heart grew more oppressed and worn, and both
His eyes were darkened by anxiety,
While since his travailing surpassed his gain
He wasted with his care and pined with pain.

C. 1754

§ 2

*How the Ambassador of Cæsar came to Núshírwán
with a locked Casket and how Búzurjmíhr was
set at large to declare its Contents*

Now in those days it chanced that Cæsar sent
An envoy with a letter to the Sháh,
With gifts, with presents, and a padlocked casket,

And said : “ O king of warriors and chiefs !
 Thou hast no lack of holy archimages,
 So let them tell, not tampering with the lock,
 What is concealed therein. If they say right
 We will send tribute and our wonted gifts ;
 But if thy clever archimages’ hearts
 Fail in this knowledge indispensable
 The Sháh must not ask tribute at our hands,
 Nor send an army to invade our realm.
 Such is the message that hath come from Cæsar :
 Make answer as it seemeth good to thee.”

The monarch of the world said to the envoy :—
 “ This thing is not a mystery to God,
 And by His Grace divine I will achieve it,
 Convoking holy men to give me aid.
 Abide here for a se’nnight, cheered with wine,
 Make merry in thy heart and be at ease.”

The matter proved perplexing to the Sháh :
 He called to him the great men and the wise,
 Who all examined it in every way
 To find a means whereby to loose that coil,
 Examined, as did all the archimages,
 That casket and that lock whose key was lacking,
 But could not tell and owned their ignorance.
 Now when that concourse proved of no avail
 The heart of Núshírwán, the Sháh, was grieved.
 He said : “ The intellect of Búzurjmíhr
 Will search this secret of the turning sky.”

The king of kings, in sore embarrassment,
 Gave orders to his treasurer to provide
 A change of raiment from the treasury,
 And had a choice steed saddled royal wise.
 He sent them to the sage. “ Thou must forget,”
 He said, “ the hardships that thou hast endured
 Because high heaven above us so ordained
 That thou shouldst have affliction at our hands.

C. 1755

Thy tongue excited my displeasure : thou
 Hast been the author of thine own oppression.
 I am confronted with a thankless task,
 The elders' hearts have been perplexed thereby,
 For Cæsar hath dispatched to us from Rûm
 A famed priest of that land and therewithal
 A casket with a tightly fastened lid
 Padlocked and sealed with musk. The envoy
 saith :—

‘ Thus said my lord : “ Reveal this hidden thing,
 And let the sages and the princes say
 What lieth in this casket.” ’ So methought :—
 ‘ No one will see through this veiled mystery
 Unless it be the soul of Bûzurjmihr.’ ”

When Bûzurjmihr had listened to those words
 His pain and former trouble were renewed ;
 He left the prison, bathed his head and body,
 And first approached in prayer the Lord of all.
 Albeit innocent himself he feared
 The Shâh, the wrathful world-lord’s, tyranny.
 He watched that day and night alike and pondered
 According to the message of his master.
 What time the sun was brilliant in the heavens
 He mused upon the aspects of the stars,¹
 He laved his heart’s eyes in the stream of wisdom,
 Chose out a trusty man among the sages,
 And said to him : “ My market hath been spoiled,
 My vision ruined by my sufferings.
 Observe upon the road the passers by,
 Address them, have no fear, and ask their names.”

Forth from his house went Bûzurjmihr and met
 A woman hastening, beautiful of face.
 That wise man vigilant informed the sage
 Of all things that were hidden from his eyes,
 And he as feeling for his way rejoined :—

¹ Couplet omitted and reading with P.

“ Ask if this Moon be wedded.”

Said the lady :—

“ I have a spouse and child withal at home.”

The sage on his white roadster, when he heard Her answer, started. Then another woman Appeared and, seeing her, his agent asked :— “ O woman hast thou got a child and spouse, Or, being single, only wind in hand ? ”

“ I have a husband if no child,” she said, “ Thou hast mine answer, suffer me to pass.”

Just then another woman came—the third. Her too the friend approached. “ My Fair ! ” said he, “ What mate hast thou who hast such goodly carriage And daintiness ? ”

“ I never had a husband,” She said, “ I would not one should see my face.”

Now mark the inference of Búzurjmíhr On hearing these replies. He hurried on With anxious mien. They brought him to the Sháh, C. 1756 Who ordered that he should approach the throne, But was exceeding troubled in his heart Because he missed the sage’s piercing glance, And heaved full many a deep and chilling sigh, Excused himself for having wronged the guiltless, Then talked of Cæsar and of Rúm, and spake Of casket and of padlock. Búzurjmíhr Made answer to the monarch of the world :— “ Be lustre thine so long as heaven shall turn. Now must we hold a session of the wise, Of Cæsar’s envoy, and the archimages, And have the casket laid before the Sháh, Before the Great, the seekers of the way ; Then in God’s strength, who gave me intellect, And made the right the business of my soul, I will declare the casket’s whole contents,

And lay no hand on it or on its lock.
 Although mine eyes be dim my heart is bright ;
 The breastplate of my soul withal is knowledge.”
 The king joyed at the words. His heart grew
 fresh

As roses in the Spring. Anxiety
 Bent him no longer, and he called for envoy
 And casket, summoned all the archimages
 And mighty men, and seated many a sage
 With Búzurjmihr, then told the ambassador :—
 “ Repeat thy message and demand an answer.”

The Rúman, hearing, loosed his tongue and thus
 Told Cæsar’s words : “ From the victorious world-
 lord

We look for wisdom, knowledge, and renown,
 And thou, O master of the world ! hast Grace,
 And stature, greatness, lore, and might of hand.
 The wise archimages—seekers of the way—
 The chiefs and heroes that attend upon thee,
 Are either all assembled at thy court,
 Or are thy lieges still where’er they be.
 If these shrewd-hearted sages shall behold
 This casket with its lock and seal and stamp,
 And state distinctly what is there concealed,
 So that their statement shall accord to wisdom,
 Then by this token I will send to thee
 The tribute that my realm can well afford ;
 But if in any wise they fail herein
 Ask not for tribute from our land again.”

Whenas the sage had heard the speaker’s words
 He loosed his tongue and offered praise and said :—
 “ Oh ! be the world’s Sháh Sháh for evermore,
 May he be eloquent and fare with fortune !
 Praise to the Master of the sun and moon,
 Who sheweth to the soul the path to knowledge,
 And knoweth all things manifest and hidden ;

I covet knowledge, He is past all need.¹
 Within the casket are three lustrous pearls,
 And greater coverture than I have said.²
 One pearl is pierced, the second is half pierced,
 The third hath had no intercourse with iron."

C. 1757

The Rúman sage, on hearing, brought the key
 To Núshírwán who looked. Concealed within
 There was a pyx, and in the pyx a veil
 Of painted silk, and in the silk three jewels,
 Just as the wise man of Írán had said,
 Because of those three gems the first was pierced,
 The second half pierced and the third intact.
 Then all the archimages praised the sage
 And showered gems on him. The king of kings
 Became of joyful countenance and filled
 The mouth of Búzurjmihr with lustrous pearls.
 His conduct in the past oppressed his heart,
 He writhed, his face grew furrowed : why had he
 Dealt so oppressively with Búzurjmihr
 From whom he had experienced love and faith ?
 The sage, when he beheld the Sháh's shrunk face,
 And grief-pierced soul, revealed what had been
 hidden,
 Declared all that had passed to Núshírwán,
 Told of the armlet, of the sable bird,
 The liege's care, the slumber of the Sháh,
 And added : " This was doomed to come to pass,
 And sorrow and remorse will profit not.
 When heaven is intending good or ill
 What are Sháh, archimage, or Búzurjmihr ?
 God hath implanted in the stars the seed,
 And we must write the sentence on our heads ;
 So let the heart of Núshírwán, the Sháh,
 Rejoice exempt from pain and grief for ever.
 Exalted though the Sháh be yet his state

¹ Reading with P.² *Id.*

Is made more gracious by his minister.
 The chase, war, pleasure, largess, justice, feast,
 These are the business of the king of kings.
 He knoweth what Sháhs did in days of yore,
 So by that token let him do the same.
 To gather treasure, to provide the host,
 To chide, speak, hear the suppliant, and take
 thought
 For rule and treasure, these things are a care,
 That, heart and soul, the minister must bear.”

§ 3

Discourse on the Responses of Núshírwán

Thus was it at the time of Núshírwán :
 He was at once the Sháh and paladin,
 At once a warrior and archimage,
 The Fire-priest and the captain of the host.
 He had his emissaries everywhere,
 And trusted not the world to ministers.

C. 1758 None could conceal from him in great or small
 The good and evil of the world’s estate.

One day a loyal archmage of his agents
 Took on himself to put this to the Sháh :—
 “ One time without reproof thou passest by
 A fault. Another time the same offender
 Is hung howe’er much he excuse himself ! ”

The Sháh replied : “ When one doth own his
 fault

I am as leech, he is as wretched patient
 That would avoid the dose and sheddeth tears ;
 If that dose fail I leech his soul no more.”

Another archmage said to him : “ Be blest,
 And sheltered from all ill on every side ! ”

The captain of the host went from Gurgán
 With privacy, and entering a wood
 There for a while he slumbered. The Gurkís
 Bore off his baggage ! He was left unfurnished,
 And, further, turneth back on that account !”

The Sháh made answer thus : “ We do not need
 That militarist. How can he guard troops
 Who cannot guard himself ? ”¹

Another said :—

“ Live happy evermore with archimages
 To sit, to banquet, and repose with thee !
 There is a famous chieftain present here,
 Whose treasure passeth thine ! ”

The Sháh replied :—

“ Yea, rightly, for he is our empire’s crown.
 I tender both his treasures and his life,
 And toil to magnify him.”

Said another :—

“ Great king ! live ever and unscathed by ill !
 Among the captives carried off from Rúm
 Are many babes unweaned.”

He gave this sentence :—

“ The little ones must not be reckoned captives.
 We will dispatch them glad and in good case
 To their own mothers.”

People wrote to him :—

“ A hundred wealthy Rúmans offer ransom.”
 “ If they are doing it through fear,” he said,
 “ Sell each chief for a cup of wine and ask
 No more because we do not lack their goods.
 I will require their jewels, purses, slaves,

¹ Mohl translates :—“ Le Sipehbed est sorti un jour de Gourgan en secret, est entré dans un bois et y a dormi pendant quelque temps ; ses bagages étaient sur un autre steppe, il n’avait rien avec lui et fut obligé de s’en revenir pour rejoindre ses bagages.” Nouschirwan répondit par cette sentence : “ Je n’avais pas besoin d’une escorte ; celui qui veille sur l’armée ne s’inquiète pas pour lui-même.”

And gold and silver with the scimitar."

They told him : " Of the rich men of the city
There are two merchants and they keep folk waking
The best part of the night with shouts of revel,
And twanging of the rebeck and the harp."

He made them this reply : " No hardship this,
And do ye others that are wealthy too
Live like these twain in mirth and jollity ;
Be inoffensive and live unaggrieved."

C. 1759 One day they wrote to him : " Mayst thou be
happy !

Far from thee ever be the evil eye !
The monarch of Yaman observed at court :—
' When Núshírwán doth ope his mouth to speak
He talketh so much of the dead that those
Alive have their glad lives made sad thereby ! ' "

He answered thus : " All wise and high-born men
Speak of the dead : the friendship is not sound
Of any that would purge the heart of them."

Another said : " O Sháh ! thy youngest son
Doth act not with the justice of his sire.
He buyeth an estate at such a rate
As to aggrieve the seller ! "

Said the Sháh :—
" This is not well, so let the seller keep
Both price and land."

" O Sháh," another said,
" Imperious, far from blame and from reproach !
Thy heart was gentle once : why hath it grown
So overbearing and so choleric ? "

He thus made answer : " I had no teeth then,
And fed on milk because I could no other,
But since my teeth came, and my back grew
straight,
My quest is flesh because I have grown strong."

Another said : " I own that thou art mighty,

Our better both in counsel and in knowledge,
But how hast thou surpassed the kings of kings,
And made the whole world watch thy policy ? ”

“ My wisdom is a thing,” he thus replied,
“ That is beyond their ken. Sense, knowledge,
counsel—

These are my ministers, my treasury
Is earth, my treasurer thought.”

Another said :—

“ O king ! thy hawk in chase hath bound an
eagle ! ”

Thus said he : “ Beat its back ; why should it
fall

Upon its better ? Gibbet it on high
To suffer in its turn, for e'en in fight
The subject may not seek to conquer kings.”

Another chief—one of the emissaries—
Said thus : “ O monarch of the world ! Barzín
At morn departed with the host and met
A reader of the stars who prophesied :—
‘ None will behold again this haughty chief,
This mighty army, and its equipage,
When once their backs are turned upon the king ! ’ ”

The Sháh replied : “ Revolving heaven hath
shown

Barzín’s designs a loving countenance,
And stars and sun and moon will not destroy
That chieftain with his treasure and his host.”

Another archmage said : “ The king, one day,
Bade choose a man, illustrious by birth,
To make the circuit of the sovereignty
Both for the sake of justice and to send
Reports concerning matters great and small,
And good or evil, to the court. Gashasp
Is both illustrious and old : ‘ twere well
That justice be administered by him.”

C. 1760

The Sháh replied : “ Gashasp, though far from want,
 Is still possessed by greed. Choose some one else,
 Who toileth not upon his own behalf,
 And is possessed of treasures of his own,
 One of experience, upright and austere,
 Whose first concern is for the poor.”

One said :—

“ The chief cook hath a grievance 'gainst the Sháh
 And chiefs, and saith : ' I dress his favourite meats,
 And serve them at cross roads. He savoureth not,
 Nor toucheth, them ! ' That loyal servant
 quaketh.”

“ Too much food may disgust,” the Sháh replied.
 Another said : “ All thoughtful people blame
 The king of kings because he goeth forth
 Without an ample escort, and the hearts
 Of all his friends are full on that account
 For fear some enemy with ill designs
 May suppliant-wise contrive to get at him.”

He made this answer : “ Equity and wisdom
 Protect the great king's person. Right sufficeth
 To guard the just judge though he be alone.”

Another said : “ O wisdom's mate ! the prince
 Of Khurásán said on the riding-ground :—
 ' I know not why the king recalled Garshásp.' ”

The Sháh made answer : “ He hath left undone
 My bidding and ignored my purposes :
 I ordered him to ope for good or ill
 My treasury's portal to deserving folk.
 The man that is a niggard in his gifts
 Concealeth all the monarch's Grace divine.”

Another said : “ The great king is a magnate
 With all men, and munificent and holy.
 What hath Mihrak, that ancient servant, done
 To have his pay reduced, his visage wan ? ”

The Sháh replied : “ Mihrak hath grown too bold,

Relying on his former services.

He came to court and took his seat bemused,
And he was never save with wine in hand.”

An archmage of the intelligencers said :—
“ The Sháh, when marching to encounter Cæsar,
Called only the Iránians to the war,
And so Irán became hard pressed by Rúm.”

He answered : “ This hostility is innate,
’Tis war with Áhriman.”

Another time
One ventured to observe : “ The Sháh selecteth
Troops differing from those of former Sháhs.
What look’st thou for in charger-riding Lions,
Expert of hand, upon the day of battle ? ”

He thus replied : “ The cavalier of war
Ne’er must be satiate of combating.
Feast and the field of battle must be one
To him both by bright day and darksome night.
He never faileth in the hour of need,
And few or many make no odds to him.”

Another said : “ O Núshírwán, the Sháh !
Live ever joyful and with youthful fortune.
A man was at the gateway from Nisá—
A servant and a trusty officer—
Who at the reckoning at the taxing-office
Was found short by three hundred thousand drachms.
He pleaded : ‘ All are spent.’ Chiefs, archimages,
And tax-collectors are concerned.”

The king,
On hearing how the archimages claimed
The money from the officer, commanded :—
“ Press not for what is spent : give him too some-
what
Out of the treasury.”

Another said :—

“ A gallant cavalier was hurt and long
Disabled. Cured he charged the ranks of Rúm,
Fell, and hath left behind him little ones.”

The Sháh commanded : “ Be four thousand
drachms

Assigned to them out of the treasury,
Because when any one is slain in war,
And leaveth babes as his memorial,
Whene’er the scribe shall read out from the roll
His name, his children must have drachms, so pay
A thousand thus to them four times a year.”

Another said : “ Be happy all thy days.
At Marv the captain of the host hath gathered
Much wealth in money but he spendeth not,
And people are abandoning the march.”

He thus made answer : “ Give that wealth—the
cause

Whereby the land is made depopulate—
Back to the folk from whom it hath been taken.
Make proclamation of the fact in Marv,
And bid erect a gibbet at his door,
In sight of all his province and his troops,
And hang alive the tyrant on the gallows,
Head-downward, that hereafter nobody
Among our paladins may turn aside
In heart and spirit from our ordinance.
Why must he bleed the poor to get him wealth,
And joy his body to his soul’s destruction ? ”

Another said : “ God-fearing Sháh ! thy subjects
Throng in thy court, extol thine equity,
And praise the Maker for thee.”

He replied :—

“ Thank God that we inspire alarm in none.
Be it ours to tender yet more carefully
Both innocent and guilty.”

Said another :—

“ O Sháh endowed with Grace and understanding !
The world is full of joy, delight, and sweets,
And lord and liege are dizzied in their heads
At night-fall with the din.”

C. 1762

“ In us,” he answered,

“ May small and great rejoice throughout the
world.”

Another said : “ O Sháh of power supreme !
Detractors speak with blame of thee and say :—
‘ He squandereth vast treasures but he never
Hath felt the labour of amassing them.’ ”

He thus returned reply : “ If I withhold
The wealth laid up within my treasury
From those deserving of it all my gain
Will turn to loss at last.”

Another said :—

“ O thou exalted king ! God grant that scath
May never come upon that soul of thine !
The Jews and Christians are thine enemies,
Are double-faced, and worship Áhriaman.”

He answered thus : “ A brave Sháh is not great
Save he be tolerant.”

“ Mardwí¹ hath spent,”

Another said, “ three hundred thousand drachms,
Famed king ! out of thy treasury and more
On mendicants, and chiefly on himself.”

He said thus : “ Such withal is our command :
‘ Tis well for thee to give to the deserving.’ ”

Another said : “ O Sháh that toilest not !
Much largess hath made void thy treasury.”

He thus returned reply : “ The open hand
Doth start a man afresh, both leaf and bough.
The world-lord, when a worshipper of God,
Hath at his disposition all the world,

¹ Reading with P.

But we have seen it niggard to the mean,
And greed and harshness tempt not me.”
“ O king ! ”

An archmage said, “ shrewd Kurákhán hath wrung
From famous Balkh three hundred thousand
drachms,
And handed them to us who laid them up
Among thy treasures.”

“ We,” he made reply,
“ Require not drachms through others’ sufferings,
So give them back to those from whom they came,
With somewhat also from the treasury,
Because the world-lord that adoreth God
Hath no desire to vex his subjects’ hearts.
Raze Kurákhán’s fine palace and enrich
His roofs with clay. His palace shall be waste,
His profit toil and, after toil, distress
And malison. Take from our roll his name,
And hold of no account his likes at court.”

Another said : “ O Sháh of glorious race !
Thy converse turneth greatly on Jamshíd
And on Káús.”

Thus Núshírwán replied :—

“ Oh ! may our knowledge keep them ever young !
I speak of them that mine own head and crown
May be remembered after I am dead.”

“ Why hideth,” asked another man, “ the Sháh
His secrets from the illustrious Bahman ? ”

C. 1763 The Sháh replied : “ He turneth him from
wisdom,

And eateth of the fruit of his own lusts.”

One said : “ O Sháh that tendereth thy subjects ?
Why hast thou recently become remiss ? ”

He thus made answer : “ I associate
With sage and archimage, for when the voice
Of Áhri man is at our ears our hearts

Grow void of counsel and our brains of sense.”

An archmage asked the monarch of the earth
To speak concerning kingship and the Faith,
And said : “ A man of wisdom will allow
A faithless better than a kingless world.”

He thus made answer : “ I have said the same,
And holy men have heard my words. The world-lord
Ne’er saw a faithless world though every one
Hath his own Faith. One man adoreth idols,
Another’s Faith is pure. One said : ‘ A curse
Is better than a blessing,’ but mere words
Will never wreck the world, so speak thy mind.
But when the great king too is void of Faith
No one will bring down blessings on the world.
Faith and the sovereignty are like the body
And soul ; the twain support the world.”¹

“ O Sháh

Of joyous nature ! thou hast oft observed,”
One said, “ before the chiefs : ‘ What time the throne
Is destitute of king then Faith and wisdom
Are worthless.’ Once thou saidest : ‘ I am fortune,
And fortune’s pretext both for good and ill,
And when one uttereth praises in the world
The crop in secret cometh back to me.’ ”

He answered : “ Yea, ’tis well. The great king’s
head
Is fortune’s crown. The world is as the body ;
Kings are its head and crowned accordingly.”

Another said : “ O Sháh, the people’s friend !
Be thine the sovereignty and length of days !
Five days have passed, O lustre of the soul !
Since last the high priest came before thy presence.”

He answered : “ I am not concerned thereat,
For he is occupied on mine affairs.”

One said : “ O Sháh of sunlike Grace to whom

¹ Cf. Vol. vi. p. 250.

Time will bring forth no peer ! we see a suitor
 Attending court each morn, and that affairs
 Are wrong with him, but wot not of his grievance.”

He answered : “ In Hijáz¹ thieves plundered him
 Of countless goods. That he may not be troubled
 I have replaced them from the treasury,
 And keep him at the court on this account
 To see if he can recognise the thieves.”

Another said : “ O Sháh of glorious birth,
 The lord of bounty and the lord of justice !
 C. 1764 Down from the time of Gaiúmart till now
 No Sháh like thee hath filled the royal throne.”

He said : “ I give thanksgiving unto God
 That matters are as He would have them be.”
 The sentences of Núshírwán are past,

The world is old but ever young my care ;
 My genius hath not blossomed to this last

Though keen it grew, such fire in eld was there !²
 For many a year I told this history

Though hidden 'twas from Saturn, moon, and
 sun,
 But since Mahmúd's name crowned my poetry

Its commendation through the world hath run.
 The idolators of Hind he bringeth down

With sword whose sheen, like silk of Wash,³ is
 bright.

Oh ! may the age fare well through his renown,
 And in his diadem the heaven delight.

¹ Reading with P. In A.D. 575 the Persians overthrew the Axumite power in Arabia and conquered Yaman. The Hijáz would come to some extent within their sphere of influence.

² Couplet omitted.

³ “ son épée damasquinée comme une broderie.” Mohl. Wash is the name of a city in Turkistán, famous for its silk.

§ 4

. *Núshírwán's Letter of Counsel to his Son Hurmuzd*

Now read the letter of Sháh Núshírwán,
 And muse upon it in thine ardent soul.
 He said : “ This letter grateful to the heart,
 Instructed, learned, well counselled, and abstruse,
 Is from the Sháh exalted and sun-faced.
 Great is he, heaven inclineth to his wish,
 The world-lord he, just and beneficent,
 Without reproach, the lavisher of treasure,
 Increaser of Kubád's renown and throne,
 Transmitter of the crown of state and justice,
 Possessed of Grace and stature, fame and conduct,
 And all that he could wish for from the crown
 Of greatness, to Hurmuzd, our own pure son,
 Who heartily accepteth all our counsels,
 And is through God glad and victorious,
 For evermore a world-lord crowned and throned.
 This lucky month upon the day Khurdád,
 With fair stars and world-brightening presages,
 We set upon thy head the crown of gold,
 As we ourselves received it from our sire,
 And give thee too the blessings which Kubád,
 The glorious, bestowed upon our crown.
 Be vigilant and master of the world,
 Be wise and noble and without offence,
 Increase in knowledge and incline to God,
 Because He is the Guider of thy soul.
 We have inquired of one of good discourse,
 One ancient both in wisdom and in years :—
 ‘ What man of us approacheth nearest God ?
 Who goeth by the straitest path to Him ? ’
 He gave reply : ‘ Choose knowledge as thou wouldest
 That people should bless thee because the sage

C. 1765 Deriveth not addition from the dust :
 Make thy pure spirit then approved by knowledge,
 Through knowledge doth the Sháh adorn the
 throne :
 Mayst thou be sage and of victorious fortune.
 God grant thou never be a promise-breaker,
 For promise-breakers have the dust for shroud.
 See that thou punish not the innocent,
 Or listen to the words of slanderers.
 Let every ordinance of thine be just,
 For justice will delight thy spirit. Seek not,
 As thou wouldst be the lustre of thy throne,
 To compass falsehood with thy tongue. Secure
 A subject in the enjoyment of his wealth,
 For others' havings are no friends of thine :
 Joy in the wealth that thou hast earned thyself.
 'Tis thine to be the asylum for all folk,
 For overlord and underling alike.
 Reward the man that acteth uprightly ;
 Oppose withal the evil-doer. Although
 Thou mayst be held in honour in the world,
 Forget not travail, misery, and loss ;
 Be what one may this is a Wayside Inn
 Wherein it booteth not to feel at home.
 Seek worth and be associate with the wise
 If dost wish that fortune shall commend thee.
 By knowledge bind the hands of tyranny,
 As thou wouldst scape the evil of mishap,
 And dearly tender him who in thy presence
 Hath trodden under foot thy foeman's life.
 The great men and the merchants of the city
 Must have their share of justice. When thou settest
 The crown of king of kings upon thy head
 Discern the worse way from the truly great.
 Keep ever in thy presence some wise man,
 And hold him as thy body and thy soul.

In matters great and small pay no regard
 To any save the accomplished and well born.
 Give not the worthless battle-gear for when
 Thou seekest it 'tis not to hand. Thy friend
 Will yield thee to the foe ; a double task
 Both difficult and wretched will be thine :
 He will bring down thy weapons to the field,
 And one day will employ them on thyself.
 Be generous to persons in distress,
 Avoid ill-doing, fear calamity,
 Discern the hidden motives of thy heart,
 Make no mere outward show of good and right,
 Be not unmeasured in beneficence,
 And hear the counsels of the experienced.
 Lean toward religious men but watch religion,
 Because it causeth bitterness and wrath.
 Proportion thine expenses to thy means,
 And be not careful to augment thy store.
 Observe the precedents of former Sháhs,
 And be a righteous judge in everything ;
 The Sháh that doth unjustly is accursed ;
 Approve but justice then and court not curses.
 Where are the crowned heads of the kings of kings ?
 Where are the great men and the ministers ?
 Their fame is now their sole memorial ;
 This Wayside Inn abideth not with any.
 Command not to shed blood, or urge the host
 To battle, lightly. Heed this weighty letter.
 Set not thy heart upon this Hostelry.
 Herein have I but sought thy good and decked
 Thy heart with knowledge by the rede of Him
 Who ruleth sun and moon ; by Him keep off
 The influence of the Dív. Have thou before thee
 This letter, day and night. Let wisdom rule
 Thy heart. If thou dost make a memory here
 Thy name will never want for majesty.

C. 1766

Now be the Maker of the world thy refuge,
 May time and earth affect thee. May high heaven
 Turn but at thy desire and in the world
 Be none aggrieved by thee."

He placed the letter,
 When written, in the treasury and abode
 With fear and trembling in this Wayside Inn.

A king of kings well counselled, wise, and just,
 Will strive to make his modesty unite
 With strength of hand and gallantry in fight,
 Be of pure Faith and put in God his trust.

See what man of these virtues is possest
 And, seeing, him his meed of praise prefer,
 Seek one that is as bright as Jupiter,
 Aspiring, armed with sword, with mail on breast ;

Who taketh from idolaters the sway,
 Who with brocade of Faith his heart hath bound.
 Yea verily the man himself is found :
 Mahmúd is monarch of the world to-day.

The quest of battle and of banqueting
 Are one to this world's lord. Abú'l Kásim !
 God grant the age joy in the sight of him,
 That open-handed and victorious king.

§ 5

How an Archmage questioned Núshirwán and how he made Answer

There was an elder versed in our old speech,
 And antiquate with action and discourse,
 Who from a volume in the ancient tongue

Saith that an archmage asked of Núshírwán :—
 “ In what way should the worshipper invoke
 In secret prayer the Master of the world
 That He may give an answer and bestow
 Withal fair fortune on his suppliant ?
 A man, with arms outstretched toward the sky,
 May make request before the Lord of time,
 Yet gain not his desire for all his prayers,
 And hath but tearful eyes and furrowed face.”

C. 1767

The conquering Sháh replied : “ Be moderate
 In thy requests to God ; when they pass bounds
 A heart o'ercharged will come of that desire.”

The archmage asked : “ What man deserveth good,
 And who is worthiest of the name of ‘ Great ? ’ ”

The Sháh replied : “ He that amasseth treasure
 Without exertion, and bestoweth not,
 Is unfit for the throne ; from time to time
 His fortune will grow dark, but well is he
 That giveth. Give, if wealth be thine, and hoard
 not.”

“ What is the base of wisdom ? ” asked the arch-
 mage,

“ And who rejoiceth in its boughs and leaves ? ”

“ The sage rejoiceth,” Núshírwán replied ;
 “ So doth the modest man of noble birth.”

The archmage asked : “ Who profiteth by know-
 ledge,

And who is witless and calamitous ? ”

The Sháh replied : “ The cherisher of wisdom
 Will cherish life which profiteth thereby
 When it aboundeth, but its lack entaileth
 Grief, care, and loss.”

The archimage inquired :—

“ Is knowledge better than the Grace of kings,
 For Grace and majesty adorn the throne ? ”

“ A sage possessed of Grace,” replied the Sháh,

Will take the whole world underneath his wing.
Thou needest wisdom, Grace, renown, and birth ;
With these four heaven will keep thee still in mind."

" In kingship who illustrateth the throne ? "
The archmage said. " Who is unfortunate ? "

And Núshírwán made answer : " One that seeketh
First for the aidance of the King, the World-lord,¹
For bounty, knowledge, and right usages
Will make him tender toward the suppliant.
Next let him give authority to those,
Who merit such distinction by their worth.
Then let him see that nothing in the world
For good or evil is concealed from him.
He should distinguish, fourthly, foe from friend :
'Tis well that kings should be without offence.
When he hath Grace and wisdom, Faith and
fortune,
Then he is worthy of the crown and graceth
The throne, while if thou findest such things lacking
Good sooth ! thou wilt behold him lustreless ;
He after death will leave an evil name,
And win not jocund Paradise at last."²

C. 1768 The archmage asked : " How many modes of
speech
Are there and what are they, because o'er some
One needs must weep while others are crown,
treasure,
And reputation, those grief, these content ? "

Said Núshírwán : " The sage hath classified
The modes of speech and thought the matter out.
First, profitable speech ; the sweet-voiced sage
Saith that it is the harmless. Secondly,
That which thou callest the deliberate
Know to be that of shrewd and fluent men,
For they speak³ largely to the point and leave

¹ Reading with P. ² Five couplets omitted. ³ Reading with P.

Their memory in the world. Next is the speech
 Of one ambitioning the word in season ;
 He will abide in honour all his years ;
 And, fourthly, that of one called by the sage
 Delectable—the competent reciter,
 Who uttereth all, both new and old, in verse ;
 While, fifthly, is the warm deliverance
 Of one of sweet tongue and harmonious voice,
 Who when he hath impleached his web of words
 Attaineth verily his heart's desire.”

The archmage said : “ In spite of all thy lore,
 And thou hast kindled all thy soul with knowledge,
 Yet thou still questionest the little worth !
 Dost say then : ‘ How shall knowledge have an
 end ? ’ ”

The Sháh replied : “ From all that I have learned
 I have attained my soul's desire and wisdom.
 Avoid wrong-doing then and look to knowledge—
 A thing more precious than the crown and throne.”

The archmage said : “ I have seen none so praised
 And eminent for lore that one could say :—
 ‘ Such is his eminence that no wise man
 Can teach him any further.’ ”

Thus the Sháh
 Replied : “ Can treasure satiate a man
 Until he lieth underneath the dust ?
 The way of knowledge is more glorious
 Than wealth, more precious in the sage's eyes.
 Our words remain as our memorial :
 Compare not wealth with knowledge.”

Said the archmage :—
 “ What with their learning and remembering
 The sages cannot be but ancient men.”

The Sháh replied : “ Although the man be old
 His knowledge faileth not to keep him young.
 Thou wilt prefer him to the foolish youth,

Whose dust is only valued for its tomb."

The archmage asked : " It was thy wont to speak
About the fortune of the kings of kings
Before the Great,¹ and more than ever now
Thou namest them but with a deep cold sigh ? "

The Sháh said : " It was never in my heart
That I should praise a process such as this—
To govern this world with the scimitar
Of justice, then pass on and vilely die."

C. 1769

" Thy usage," said the archmage, " in the past
Was this—to speak to all in nobler words.
Now thou despisest them and sayest naught
About the past or present."

Núshírwán

Made answer saying : " I have talked enough,
And now I purpose to depend on deeds."

The archmage said : " Thy prayers in former times
Before the Fire were not so long as now.
Thy praises too are longer than they were,
Thy plaints and supplications more profuse."

He gave this answer saying : " Holy God
Exalteth from the dust His worshipper,
Doth favourably dispose the sky toward him,
And maketh all the world to be his slave.
If this slave faileth to appreciate,
Let him not scape from hardship and distress."

The archmage asked : " Since thou becamest
king
What greater cause for thankfulness hast thou
Toward thy Maker ? Hath that eminence
Increased thy joy and filled thy foemen's hearts
With blood ? "

He answered thus : " Thanks be to God,
Our fortune hath been good. None in my presence
Hath ever sought for the supremacy,

¹ Reading with P. and T.

But at my chastening washed his hands of ill.
My foemen have grown feeble in the fight
When they beheld mine onset and my mace.”

The priest went on : “ When warring in the West
Thou wast both quick of clutch and valorous,
But when thou wast campaigning in the East
Thou wast long-suffering and deliberate.”

And Núshírwán made answer thus : “ The youth
Accounteth not of pain and toil of mind,
But when a man hath come to sixty years
He must assume a gentler attitude.

Thanks to the World-lord who is all-providing,
The Author of the good and ill of fortune,
That I had prowess in my youthful days,
And recked not if my luck were good or bad.
Now knowledge, treasure, generosity,
And rede, accompany my days of age,
The world is 'neath my rule and usages,
And circling heaven my breastplate in the fight.”

Said the archmage : “ The Sháhs of long ago
Desired to hold discourse on all affairs ;
Thy words are briefer and thy secrets more,
Yet thou surpassest those famed men of old.”

He made this answer, saying : “ Every king,
That doth believe in Him who giveth all,
Is not concerned about himself for He,
Who made the world, still watcheth over it.”

“ I see the kings who should be glad of heart,”
The archmage said, “ most anxious in our times.”

And Núshírwán replied : “ The man of sense
Hath ever at his heart the fear of loss.”

The archimage rejoined : “ The Sháhs of old
Allowed not care and fight to mar their feasts.”

He made this answer saying : “ In their cups
They ever grew forgetful of their fame,
But fame hath triumphed o'er the cup with me,

C. 1770

My spirit is beforehand with the time."

The archmage said : " Sháhs used to tend themselves,

Employing drug and leech and remedy,
Lest they should have to soil themselves with tears."

" A man, whose time is not yet come," he said,
" Not yet o'er taken by the turning sky,
Will stand secure, and drugs will profit naught,
Because the chance of time protecteth him,
But when the hour for passing is at hand
Then no precaution will avert his fate."

The archmage said : " Thou praisest much and prayest

The Maker, yet at heart thou art not glad
The while, but ever hast a soul all care."

" There is no care at all," said Núshírwán,
" The Sháh's heart is at one with turning heaven ;
I fear that those who offer praise to me,
And shower benedictions on my Faith,
Affect a greater fervour than they feel :
Mine object is to read my subjects' hearts."

" Why joy we in our children," asked the archmage,

" And why do we desire a family ? "

" The man that leaveth children in the world
Will not become forgotten," he replied.

" If he have children he will relish life,
And for that reason will abstain from vice,
While if he pass away the pang is slight,
Because a child's eyes watch his paling face."

" Who liveth at his ease," the archmage asked,
" And who repenteth of his own good deeds ? "

He thus replied : " The worshipper of God
Will take the reins of fortune in his hands
And, seeking no addition, is at ease,
Who if he sought it would be full of fear.

Then as for what thou said'st about good deeds,
And secret inclinations to do good,
Know, no one is more mortified than he
That meditateth good for thankless folk."

"The evil-doer dieth," said the archmage,
"The world removeth from the roll his name.
The righteous man will likewise pass away,
And destiny account his every breath.
What need is there for praising excellence
Since death is here to reap both good and bad?"

And Núshírwán made answer thus : "Good deeds
Will find a ready market everywhere.
He that doth good deeds dieth not though dead,
But resteth, giving up his soul to God;¹
He that doth fail therein will have no rest,
And leave behind an evil memory."

The archmage further said : "No ill is worse
Than death. If so, then what is our resource?"

C. 1771

The Sháh replied : "On leaving this dark earth,
The life which then thou wilt have gained is pure.
Whoe'er lived here in fear and care must needs
Bewail that life but, whether Sháh or subject,
Thou wilt be quit of this world's fear and pain."

The archmage asked him : "Which is worst of
these

In filling us with anguish and chagrin?"

The Sháh made answer : "Reckon mountain-heavy
The troubles that descend on us in troops,
And what is fear except the fear of troubles,
Than which there is naught stronger in the world?"

"How can we 'scape from these?" the archmage
asked,

"For this world's doings give us cause to weep?"

He thus made answer : "Knowledge is the way:
The sage is ever cheerful."

¹ Couplet omitted.

“ Which of us,”

Inquired the archmage, “ hath most store of treasure ? ”

The Sháh made answer : “ He that hath least toil.”

The archmage asked : “ Which is the foulest fault, One alien most from worth and Paradise ? ”

The Sháh made answer : “ In the case of women A strident voice and lack of modesty ; But, in the case of men, to be a fool, And thus to spend a lifetime as in prison.”

The archmage asked : “ Who hath most confidence ? ”

“ He that hath least remorse,” replied the Sháh, “ And goeth soiled in body, and with heart Black with iniquity, before his God.”

The archmage said : “ Who is the upright man, Whose heart is proven by his soul and wisdom ? ”

The Sháh thus answered : “ He that toileth on Through gain and loss and compasseth no ill.”

The archmage asked : “ Who is the best of men, The crown upon the head of all mankind ? ”

“ The meek to whom a crown availeth naught,” The Sháh replied ; “ not one intent on profit, Not even though he be of lofty aims ; Next, he whose greatness is its own reward— The generous man whose heart is purged from darkness—

And, thirdly, he that hath a zeal divine, Proceeding from integrity and wisdom.”

“ What,” said the archmage, “ is the heart’s chief dread ? ”

“ The troubles that we bring upon ourselves,” The Sháh replied.

“ What giving is the best,” The archmage said, “ so that the man who giveth

May be exalt and great ? ”

“ In gain and loss,”

The Sháh rejoined, “ keep naught from the deserving.”

The archmage asked concerning this world’s doings :—

“ Declare its process open and concealed.

Whate’er the manner of that action be,

For loss or profit, shall we acquiesce ? ”

“ The All-knowing,” thus the Sháh replied, “ is C. 1772 greater

And higher than this ancient sky although
It knowing be and mindful ; He is Lord
Of this world’s lords. Become not then perverse,
Avoid disaster, and attribute not
Good fortune and misfortune to the sky.
Know that both ill and good proceed from Him
That hath no peer—the One eternal Cause,
Whose word is ‘ Be ’ and what He willeth is,
Who was and is and will be evermore.”

“ The body is the hostel of the soul :

Which of them feeleth pain ? ” the archmage asked.

The Sháh replied : “ Our mortal bodies suffer
So long as they have brains, but when the soul
Hath filtered through they lose their consciousness,
And when it hath departed are dissolved.”

The archmage questioned him on self-control :—

“ In what way can we hide our greed and need ? ”

The Sháh replied : “ ’Tis fitting that the sage
Suppress them, yet thou ever wilt be vexed
By greed because ne’er satiate of treasure.”

The archmage asked : “ Among the kings of yore,
The men of sense, rede, faith, and precedent,
Whom knowest thou as subject of our praise,
When he is dead, O monarch of the earth ? ”

“ That great king,” this was Núshírwán’s reply,

“ Who is a worshipper of God and pure,
 And thankful to the righteous Lord of all,
 Who filleth none with fear of tyranny,
 Who giveth to the good a hopeful heart,
 And to the bad a heart of fear and pain,
 Who furnisheth his troops from his own treasures,
 And turneth on malignants their own ill,
 Who questioneth the sages of the world,
 And keepeth from his foes his bad and good.”

The archmage asked : “ Wherein consisteth worship,
 And who approacheth to God’s holiness ? ”

“ The subtle will direct,” the Sháh replied,
 “ His soul as by fine hair-breadths and first know
 The being and the unity of God,
 Which small instruction will make evident,
 And he will offer thanks for mercies given,
 While putting trust in God and fearing Him,
 Who is thy terror when thou seekest ill,
 Thy trust when thou dost well. If thou art sound
 Of Faith and seek’st the Way all will esteem thee,
 While if thou art malign and ill-disposed
 Thy soul hath forwarded its packs to Hell.
 Feel not at home with this world for ’twill hold
 Its secrets from thee. Tend to works of Faith ;
 Thy good choice will not injure thee. Let wisdom
 Instruct thy heart and let not fortune fool thee.
 Again, thou shalt consort not with the guilty
 In wrong and strife. Loathe secretly at heart
 This world because of that which is to come.
 Let thy seat ever be among the sages,
 A devotee of everlasting joys,
 For what we have on earth will pass away,
 And reason counteth them no joys at all.
 Mayst thou incline to sense and rede. Let wisdom
 Guide thee to God. Speak not unmeasured words,
 For thou’rt new-fangled and the world is old.

Be drunk not with the pleasures of the day.
 Choose not the company of wicked men.
 Refrain thy heart from what can never be,
 And give such largess as 'tis fit to give.
 Withhold not from a friend aught that thou hast,
 Though he should ask thine eyes, thy brains, and
 skin,
 And if two friends would take account together
 No daysman should be needed for that task.
 If thou associate with a foe so act
 That he may not obtain a hold upon thee.
 When one doth seek the path of right his need
 Is parts, humility, and gentleness.
 Let not thy tongue exaggerate thy merits,
 For falsehood is no merit with the just,
 Who hold one's high estate a thing of naught,
 Another's poverty no mark for scorn.
 If some malicious person talk with thee
 Let not his malice anger thee, and then,
 When, being well assured that thou art weak,
 He useth language that is past all bounds,
 Reply to him in measured terms and speak
 Words goodly and well-loving. If it be
 That thou canst bring him to himself by kindness
 He will repent his former speech. Devote not
 Thy leisure to indulgence. Idleness
 Is naught if thou art wise. Be diligent
 In all thine undertakings and give ear
 To knowledge. Enter on no enterprise
 Whereof the end will cause remorse or anger.
 Have pity on the sad in his distress ;
 Bring not his heart to anguish and disaster.
 The sage that traineth his own heart to patience
 Is not held worthless in the World-lord's eyes,
 But knoweth what he meriteth with Him,
 And compasseth all actions with discretion,

For increase from a friend is laudable,
And greatness and integrity will bring
Addition. Furthermore that man of God
Will not begrudge the scattering of treasure,
But turneth him from waywardness and loss,
And maketh right and service his profession—
A stem with boughs whereby God's worshipper,
The virtuous saint, hath proved victorious.
There is but one injunction and one way—
Incline to God and let Him shelter thee."

C. 1774

If thou, O monarch ! art of just intent
Good will remain to be thy monument
As it doth with Sháh Núshírwán whose flesh
Hath turned to dust although his fame is fresh.
Himself unseen his fame is plain to all ;
His words survive as his memorial,
And through the righteous deeds that he hath done
His fame past doubt will live while time shall run,
And on his soul shall be, while earth and sky
Abide in place, the sages' eulogy.

PART VI

THE SHÁH'S LAST YEARS

ARGUMENT

The poet tells of the last war of Núshírwán against Rúm and of the Sháh's transaction with a shoemaker, the appointment of his son Hurmuzd as his successor after that prince had been questioned by Búzurjmihr, the Sháh's testament and last counsels to his son, his dream of the advent of Muhammad, and the death of the Sháh and of Búzurjmihr.

NOTE

§§ 1-3. After ten years of peace war again broke out between the Persian and Roman empires in A.D. 572. The Sháhnáma is correct in representing that the latter was to blame for the renewal of hostilities. The Emperor Justin II., who had succeeded his uncle Justinian in A.D. 565, wanted war. The scene of operations covered much the same ground as on the previous occasion. The Persians made a raid into Syria, recorded in the Sháhnáma by the mention of Halab (Chalybon-Beroea, Aleppo), and an unsuccessful attack on Antioch. The Romans, under Marcian (Bátarún), the prefect of the East, besieged Nisibis, held by the Persians ever since its cession to Shápúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II.), by Jovian in A.D. 363. Núshírwán raised the siege, drove the Romans into the stronghold of Dárá on the foot-hills of Mount Masius, and besieged them there. After a gallant defence the fortress fell late in A.D. 573.¹ Mount Masius seems to be the Mount Sakíla of the Sháhnáma, the scene of one of Gushtásp's exploits during his exile in Rúm.² Justin on this resigned the direction

¹ For Dárá see GDF. v. 86 and *note*. ² See Vol. iv. p. 342 *seq.*

of affairs to Tiberius who to gain time purchased a temporary suspension of hostilities from the Persians. This is represented in the Sháhnáma as the conclusion of peace and as a triumph for Núshírwán but historically the war was still in progress at the time of his death four years later, and the Great King, shortly before the end of his reign, had to make a somewhat hasty and ignominious retirement to Ctesiphon.¹

§ 2. We have already met with the cobbler or shoemaker, introduced as characteristic of a type, in the Sháhnáma.²

§§ 4-6. See p. 3.

§ 7. P. omits this section which of course comes from Muhammadan sources. Though interpolated into Persian story it does not seem to be an interpolation in Firdausi's Sháhnáma for there appears to be no good reason for supposing that the passage was written by a hand other than that poet's. A similar account appears both in the Persian and Arabic Tabarí.³

The ascent of two score degrees is intended to indicate that Muhammad was forty years old when he received his "call."

Muhammad, having been challenged by idolaters to divide the moon in twain, is said to have pointed his finger at it, on which it was at once divided into two parts, one of which remained stationary while the other was concealed behind a mountain. Another tradition says that Mount Hirá intervened between the two halves. Travellers from a distance when questioned reported that they had observed the same phenomenon.⁴ The passage in the Kurán on which the traditions are based runs as follows:—"The hour hath approached and the MOON hath been cleft:

But whenever they see a miracle they turn aside and say,
This is well-devised magic."⁵

The Súra in which the quotation occurs is known as "THE MOON."

¹ RSM, p. 437

² ZT, ii. 235, NT, p. 253.

³ RK, p. 74.

⁴ See Vol. vii. pp. 24, 260.

⁵ RM, Pt. II. Vol. ii. p. 753.

§ 1

How Núshírwán made ready to war against Cæsar

It is recorded in the ancient book
 From the recital of a truthful sage
 That when news came from Rúm to this fair land
 For Núshírwán, the world-lord : “ Mayst thou live,
 For Cæsar is no more and to another
 Hath yielded time and earth,” death filled his soul
 With care ; his ruddy countenance became
 Like yellow leaves. He chose out of Írán
 An envoy of experience and high birth,
 And then dispatched him unto Cæsar’s son,
 Dispatched him to that fresh and fruitful Bough,
 First charging him with many kindly words,
 And saying : “ 'Tis an evil none can 'scape.”

He wrote a letter in distress and grief,
 With eyes all tearful and cheeks sallow, thus :—
 “ God grant thee life and loving-kindness
 Now that thy sire is dead. No living thing
 Is born unless to die. A Wayside Inn
 Is this and we pass on. Although we handle
 The crown or helm and casque we find no quittance
 From death’s clutch. What is Cæsar or the Khán
 When his time cometh and all suddenly
 Shall lay his head in dust ? Mayst thou receive
 No lack of joyful tidings of thy sire ;
 May Christ befriend his soul. Now I have heard
 That thou art seated on his famous throne,
 And hast adorned the fortune that was his.
 Require of us such strength as thou dost need
 Of steeds, of arms, of treasure, and of troops.”

The ambassador went forth from Núshírwán ;
 He made the journey in all haste to Cæsar,

And, when he reached the court, they gave him entry ;

The envoy of the Sháh approached the state.

When Cæsar saw the title on the scroll

His heart swelled at the pride of Núshírwán.

He was a hasty youth, new to the throne,

Showed himself overbearing to the envoy,

Saluted him in an unseemly fashion,

With lax observance and courtesy,

C. 1775 Gave him a lodging distant from the court,
And took no notice of the Great King's letter.
A week passed, Cæsar's counsellors assembled,
And he addressed their leader : " Now consider
The answer to this letter, draw it up,
As thou dost know to do, in fitting terms,
And set forth good and ill."

The priest replied :—

" Thy liege am I and will obey the world-lord."

So all the bishops, priests, and counsellors

Assembled by themselves apart and then

Wrote with all speed a letter in response,

As Cæsar bade, and first they praised the Maker,

And based their praise on wisdom, then they said :—

" Was such a letter worthy of the Sháh,

A letter graceless and malevolent ?

Thou dost amiss for Cæsar is but young,

But lately crowned, our king in right of birth.

Forbear to press the youth for this one year

With haughty superscriptions, tax and toll.

The youth hath written in befitting terms

To all the lieges and the potentates,

As the illustrious emperor of Rúm,

To whom the mountain-tops are so much wax.

The envoy of the Sháh hath come to us,

And he will tell the Sháh what he hath seen

With us—our words of grief and joy alike :

Our weal and woe shall not remain concealed.
 One Cæsar hath departed but another
 Succeeded who exalteth o'er all chiefs
 His head without regard to any king
 Among the underlords and overlords."

When they were ready with that Rúman letter
 They summoned the ambassador to court.
 That sage, on hearing that they were advised,
 Came to the court and asked for the response.
 They made him ready an unworthy robe
 Of honour and put strangers from the hall.
 Then Cæsar said to him : " No slave am I,
 The inferior of the Haitálians and Chín.
 One should not lightly treat a potentate
 Although thy Sháh be Great King in the world.
 He that hath many enemies is great,
 And I have foes and friends upon my skirts.
 Why dost thou scant me of my majesty,
 And cloud my sun ? Thou, when such need is mine,
 Shalt be my king, my father's memory.
 Make fair report of thine experience here,
 And seek no foul intent in my response."

They put the robe of honour on the sage,
 And called the marchlord's roadster to the door.
 He parted hastily and, tarrying not
 At any stage, reached Núshírwán and told
 What he had seen and heard and what had passed.
 The Sháh was sorry at the words and said :—
 " Thou hast had fruit of travel. I have heard
 That whosoe'er indulgeth his self-will,
 Not thinking what he doth, will smart therefor.
 If he discerneth not 'twixt friend and foe
 In telling thus the secret of his heart
 To thee I ween too that he is no friend
 To us and; further, hath not blood and feet
 And skin. By holy God, by sun and moon,

C. 1776

By crown and throne and by Ázargashasp,
 I swear that if I leave of Rúman race
 A single man in joy upon the throne
 I am not of the race of bold Kubád,
 And in men's presence never mention me.
 Henceforth will I make black the fame of Rúm,
 And set the cultivated parts a-blaze.
 Moreover he shall fill the ox-skins for us
 With all the gems and treasures of his realm,
 And my sword's point shall touch not sheath until
 I have my heart's desire upon this Rúman,
 Who arrogantly boasteth : 'I am Cæsar,'
 As though I were but one among his chiefs ! "

He bade the clarions and the Indian bells
 And gongs be sounded at the palace-gate,
 And bound upon his mighty elephants
 The kettledrums. The world was indigo
 With dust. A host that made the green sea¹ quail
 Marched forth from Madá'in toward the waste,
 While at the blare of trump, the gleam² of flag,
 And stir of horsemen in their golden boots,
 Thou wouldest have declared : "The stars are
 drowned,
 And all revolving heaven is astound ! "

§ 2

*How Núshírwán took the Stronghold of Sakila and
 how a Shoemaker had Dealings with him*

When tidings came to Cæsar of the Sháh :—
 " He hath marched forth in anger from Írán,"
 He set forth from 'Ammúriya³ to Halab ;

¹ Cf. Vol. vi. p. 174 and note. ² Reading with P.
³ Cf. Vol. vi. p. 23 and note.

The world was filled with tumult, bruit, and din.
 Three hundred thousand horsemen of Irán
 Besieged the fortress of Halab. Troops gathered
 From every side and tarried not from strife.

The warrior-prelates of the Rúman host

Set up their catapults on every side.¹

The Iránians took the stronghold of Sakíla,
 For from that region they would fain attack ;

Halab became as 'twere a sea of blood,

And all the host of Bátarún sought quarter ;

Unnumbered Rúmans perished 'neath the arrows,

And many were ta'en prisoners in the fight.

Within two se'nights the Iránians brought

Some thirty thousand captives to the king.

The Rúmans dug a trench before their host,

And let the water in at break of day.

They barred the Sháh's advance ; he and his troops

Were at a stand in fight. He called to him

His commissaries and discussed with them

The posture of the war at large and said

Thus : " This hath grown a matter of much toil :

We cannot pass the water and the fosse.

The troops have need of money and supplies,

As well as horses, mail, and Rúman helms."

C. 1777

The commissaries, scribes, and treasurers

Of that world-lord went the treasury,

Which, as the number of his soldiers stood,

Was in dinárs three hundred thousand short.²

An archimage came to the Sháh like dust,

And told him what the treasury lacked, whereat

The Sháh's face gloomed. He ordered Búzurjmíhr

To come, and said to him : " With treasury void

What booteth me the throne of king of kings ?

Go, call the camel-drivers, and dispatch

Some Bactrian camels on the road and take

¹ Cf. Vol. i. p. 373.

² Reading with P.

Out of the treasures of Mázandarán
A hundred loads and upwards of dínárs.”

But Búzurjmihr made answer to the world-lord:—
“ O just, wise, loving Sháh ! the way is long
To reach the treasures of Írán, the while
Our troops are destitute and at a stand ;
But in the cities round about are those,
A hundredth of whose wealth would pay our troops.
If thou shalt ask the merchants and the thanes
To make advances they will not refuse.”

The Sháh was in this matter of a mind
With what the wise man of Írán had said,
And Búzurjmihr chose out a messenger,
Wise, of a cheerful heart, and goodly face,
And said to him : “ Go with a second horse,
And choose thee out some lusty notable
Among the merchants and the thanes—a man
Of mighty reputation—and request
A loan of money for the troops. The Sháh
Will order money to be sent with speed
Out of the treasury.”

That emissary,
Fair-spoken, young in years but old in wisdom
And shrewd, came to a neighbouring town and
asked
A loan of money for the king’s affairs,
And round him gathered many of the rich.
A certain man, who made and vended shoes,
Attended closely to the envoy’s words,
And asked : “ How much ? ”

C. 1778 The gallant envoy told,
And said : “ O man of wisdom and of wealth !
The sum amounteth to four million drachms.”

Said that shoemaker : “ I will furnish them,
And earn the treasurer’s praise.”

He brought his balance,

Weights, and the drachms, but asked no bond in writing.

He weighed the coin, the envoy's task was done.

Then that shoemaker said : " O fair of face !

Be good enough to say to Búzurjmihr :—

' I have but one child only in this world,

For whom my heart is all anxiety.'

Then add : ' The monarch of the world perchance

Will grant a private favour to myself,

And let me place my boy among his sages,

For he hath wealth and intellect therefor.' "

" With pleasure," was the messenger's reply,

" For thou hast cut my quest for treasure short."¹

So Búzurjmihr came to the Sháh rejoicing,
Whose face cleared when he saw that wealth.

Thereafter

He said : " Thanks be to God, whom I have known
Through all my years of life, that in our realm
There is a manufacturer of shoes,
Blessed in this manner and illustrious.

God grant that we may never injure one
That is possessed of such a store of wealth.

Discover for me what his wishes are,

That this good will of his to us may last,

And when thou payest the debt bestow upon him
A hundred thousand drachms that he may not
Forget us."

Búzurjmihr said to the world-lord :—

" O well-starred Sháh of goodly countenance !

God grant that no king who is tyrannous

Be happy on his throne and fortunate.

Thy subjects all are men of wealth, aspire,

And are possessed of thrones and diadems.

Now this boot-seller, if the Sháh will hear,

Made one request. He said, for so the envoy

¹ Couplet omitted.

Reporteth : ' May the world-lord mate with wisdom.
 I have a son grown up who is desirous
 Of one to teach him learning, and if now
 The Sháh is willing to assist therein,
 So that my good son may become a scribe,
 Then for the Sháh's life will I pray God, saying :—
 " May this throne-worthy live eternally." ' ' '

The Sháh made answer saying : " O wise man !
 How hath the Dív perplexed thy vision ! Go,
 And lead the camels back, for God forbid
 That we ask him for silver and for pearls.
 How should the merchant's son become a scribe,
 Accomplished, learned, and mindful though he be ?
 Our son when he shall sit upon the throne
 Will need a scribe whose fortune will prevail.

C. 1779 If this young boot-seller attain distinction,
 And my son look to him and list to him,
 The man of wisdom and of noble birth
 Will have but discontent and chilling sighs,
 The sage will be held lightly by my son,
 Receive no praise for what he answereth,
 And we shall be accursed, when we are dead,
 For having introduced this precedent.
 Our rations must be got by honest means.
 Ask not his money, talk not of our needs,
 Dispatch the camels back upon their way,
 And ask shoemakers for supplies no more."

So with the cash the envoy went again ;
 Those drachms filled that shoemaker's heart with
 pain.¹

¹ Two couplets omitted.

§ 3

How the Envoys of Cæsar came to Núshírwán with Apologies and Presents

Whenas from Pisces Sol displayed its crown,
 And flung a robe of ivory o'er the earth,
 The scouts returning from the trench-edge came
 Before the exalted Sháh and said to him :—
 “ An embassage from Cæsar hath arrived
 In tribulation to excuse his faults.”

The ambassador approached immediately
 With benedictions upon Núshírwán,
 On seeing whose head and crown the Rúman
 heaved

A cold sigh, thinking : “ Lo ! a Sháh exalted
 With kingship, manhood, and a mighty host ! ”

Two score pilosophers of Rúm, whose tongues
 Were full of utterance and their hearts of sighs,
 Brought, each one, thirty thousand in dínárs
 As offerings to the king. When they beheld
 His comely countenance they came lamenting,
 And writhing serpent-like. The king of kings,
 On seeing them, received them graciously,
 Assigning them the customary seats,
 And then their spokesman thus addressed him :

“ Cæsar,
 O Sháh ! is young and hath but just acceded ;
 His sire is dead, the world is new to him,
 And he is unacquainted with affairs.
 Now we are all of us thy tributaries,
 And servants, and are under thy protection.
 For thee Rúm is Írán, Írán is Rúm ;
 Why then distinguish them ? The king of kings
 Hath all the age's wisdom for his own,

‘And straighteneth Cæsar’s back. The Khán of
Chín,

C. 1780 The king of Hind, are glad in him and help
To grace his throne. Although a youth, not yet
Of man’s estate, made utterance ill-advised
Let not the king of kings, in whom the vault
Of lapis-lazuli rejoiceth, take
Revenge thereat or dudgeon. We will pay
The tribute laid on Rúm from the beginning,
And keep pact.”

Smiling at the envoy’s words
Said Núshírwán : “ Although the boy be noble
His speech hath little wisdom. What is Cæsar ?
What Bátarún, the insensate one, whose tongue
Hath caused his soul’s abasement ? All the wise
Born of Sikandar’s stock have proved triumphant,
And eminent, yet if one doeth not
Our bidding but rejecteth our advice
And our alliance, from his peopled realm
Will we send up the dust and will not fear
His treasures and his troops.”

The envoys kissed
The ground, as courtiers use, and made reply :—
“ O Sháh that art victorious and supreme !
Blame not the past. We are thy travail’s dust,
The warders of thy treasure. When the king
Shall take us into favour we shall cease
Both from misfortune and from discontent.
The toils that here the king of kings hath borne
Are no small matter in the Rúmans’ eyes,
And we will pay, by way of toll and tax,
His treasury ten ox-hides of dínárs.
‘Tis thine to bid us pay thee less or more,
And to accept it though it be unworthy.”

“ As touching treasure,” thus the Sháh replied,
“ The matter resteth with my minister.”

Then all the Rúmans went before that archmage,
 Went with loud lamentations and ill-starred,
 Used every plea at large, told Cæsar's purpose,
 Informed him of the ox-hides and dínárs,
 And matters that concerned the peace of Rúm.
 The archmage answered thus : " Ye give the gold,
 But what brocade will ye present as well ?
 What time the king returneth he will need
 A thousand pieces of gold-woven brocade,
 For he is constantly concerned with gifts
 Of robes of honour for his lords and lieges."

The Rúmans gave consent thereto and then
 Returning did obeisance to the Sháh.
 He tarried on the battlefield awhile.
 Then when the king and host had taken rest
 He chose among the troops a warrior—
 One of ability in ciphering—¹

And gave him soldiers that he might demand
 The Rúman tribute and convey it home.
 The Sháh departed thence toward Taisafún
 With troops behind him and in front of him,
 All furnished well with silver and with gold,
 With silvern bridles and with golden girdles.
 " The air is silken all," thou wouldst have said,
 " With all the silken banners of the chiefs,
 While hills and plains are golden and the belts
 Are like the Pleiades with jewelry."

When he drew near the city on his march
 A multitude went out to welcome him.
 All came to Núshírwán afoot with loins
 Girt up for service and with open hearts,
 While all that had accompanied the Sháh
 Proceeded to the palace-gate afoot,
 And all the mighty chieftains called down blessings
 Upon that Sháh alert and just and holy,

C. 1781

¹ Couplet omitted.

While those of greatest eminence brought gifts
 Of precious stones. The Sháh, on his return,
 Made manifest his power to all the chiefs,
 And then the warriors went home. There came
 Addition in the world to each man's fame.¹

§ 4

How Núshirwán chose Hurmuzd as his Successor

The high-souled minstrel, who instructeth me,
 What said he of time's mutability ?
 " No prudent sage will set his mind and heart
 Upon this Hostel whence we must depart,
 For we arise and fall from day to day,
 And alternate our joyance with dismay.
 Dark earth will be our final resting-place,
 This with high honour, that with deep disgrace,
 And after they depart they tell us not
 If wakeful joy or slumber be their lot ;
 Still if they flourish not that pass our ken
 At least they will not strive with death again.
 In contemplation of that day of awe
 What are five years and twenty or five score,
 Passed by one man in pleasure and delight,
 Passed by another in penurious plight ?
 None have I seen that had a wish to die
 Among the upright or the waywardly,
 But all are shocked at death—the pious one,
 Just as the idol-serving Áhriman."

Old man ! when three score years and one have
 past,

¹ " Lorsqu'il fut près son palais, le roi congédia chacun des grands, et ces héros se rendirent aux lieux de leur demeure, célébrant dans le monde entier la gloire de Kesra." Mohl.

Wine, cup, and rest grow savourless at last,
 Yet wine for one that readieth to die
 Is as a wool-coat when 'tis winterly,¹
 When body freezeth in the midst of vice,
 And soul hath lost its way to Paradise.
 Full many a friend hath lagged or passed away,
 But in the waste the cup with thee will stay.
 Unless thy life's endeavour thou forecast
 Sure retribution will be thine at last.
 Ill-doing endeth in calamity ;
 If thou dost ill the world will sadden thee.
 Joy not in evil that thou hast achieved,
 Who, grieving others, shalt thyself be grieved.
 Know that, however great may be the sum
 Of these thine earthly years, thine end will come ;
 So multiply thy good deeds here below
 That thou mayst gladden when thou hast to go.
 The deeds accomplished and the words let fall
 In life will serve as our memorial.
 I ask of God from time, its Maker He,
 For such a respite, such felicity,
 That all these many tales and stories told,
 Now over-passed by years and waxen old,
 From Gaiúmart to Yazdagird, which be
 In disarray, may be arrayed by me ;
 That I may range them, weed that garth, and tell
 Anew what hap the kings of kings befell,
 Then verily I shall not grieve when I
 Shall have to quit this Wayside Hostelry.

And now what saith the man of ardent soul
 Of Núshírwán, the world-lord's, purposes ?
 The monarch at the age of seventy-four
 Became possessed by thoughts of death and sought
 A master for the world whose chiefest aim
 Should be to clothe him in the robe of justice,

¹ Literally " In (the month of) Dai."

C. 1782

Display compassion to the mendicants,
 Be great, untroubled, and of ardent soul.
 He had six sons of noble birth who all
 Were great, shrewd-hearted, and of kingly mien,
 With valour, learning, self-control and counsel,
 Young with a love of knowledge, and of these
 The wisest and the eldest was Hurmuzd,
 The nobly born, a man unparalleled,
 Exalted, knowing, fair of countenance,
 And well affected to the noble race.¹
 The Sháh gave orders to his officers
 To test the disposition of his son,
 By day and night to mark his utterances,
 And to inform the monarch of the world
 Of his proceedings whether good or bad.
 At that time said the Sháh to Búzurjmihr :—
 “ I have a secret purpose in my mind.
 When I exceeded three score years and ten
 My musky tresses took a camphor-hue,
 And when I quit this Wayside Hostelry
 A master will be needed for the world,
 Who will give largess to the mendicant,
 The stranger, and the man of his own kindred,
 Be bounteous, will refrain from love of treasure,
 And set his heart not on this Wayside Inn—
 One whose whole purpose ever is toward good,
 Whose place is on the Sháh’s throne. I thank God
 C. 1783 That I have sons wise, learned, who worship Him,
 And none esteem I dearer than Hurmuzd,
 Or more pre-eminent for rede and sense.
 Of mercy, generosity, and right
 I see naught lacking in his heart at all.
 So summon now the archmages and the chiefs,
 All that observe the way of understanding,

¹ i.e. the Persians. Hurmuzd was half Turkish by birth—the son of the daughter of the Khán. See pp. 87, 97 seq.

Prove ye his knowledge and thereby present
Accomplishment upon accomplishment."

§ 5

*How the Archimages questioned Hurmuzd and how
he replied*

The archimages, the investigators,
And counsellors assembled, called to them
Hurmuzd, the atheling, and seated him
Among the chiefs. Then Búzurjmihr began :—
“ O prince fair-starred and fair to look upon !
What know’st thou that will brighten the pure soul
And wisdom, and be fruitful for the body ? ”

He answered : “ Knowledge is the best, for great
Among the great is one of understanding.
In knowledge is man’s safety ; it restraineth
The hands of Áhriman from ill, and next
Come patience and munificence whereby
The body gaineth fame and ease.”

The sage

Then asked : “ What sheweth virtue to advantage,
And what will raise a man to high estate ? ”

Hurmuzd replied : “ First, to be courteous
To all in good and ill ; next, to endeavour
To grieve as little as one can the hearts
Of every one ; and, thirdly, to deal justly
Within the world and so gain self-content.”

On that pure-hearted prince of goodly mien
Gazed Búzurjmihr, the questioner, and said :—
“ Now will I speak concerning needful topics.
Count them upon thy hands, remember all
That I shall ask, and make a just response
To them in that same order. Bring to bear

High-mindedness and justice for, if thou
 Art heedful of such matters, of a truth
 Heaven's gate is oped to thee since I will question
 At large that I may have response in full.
 The Master of the world instruct thee ! May
 Thy wit be bright, good fortune by thy mate.
 Now will I question thee of what I know
 With fairness. Answer as thy knowledge is.
 The wise man is discerned by his replies,
 And compasseth his will in everything.

C. 1784 Inquiry is the lock, response the key ;
 Response discriminateth bad from good.
 Who is the child dear in his father's eyes,
 Fair of behaviour, and without offence ?
 What man is worthy of our heart's compassion,
 So that one needs must weep at his distress ?
 What man repenteth of his own good deed,
 And that too from the bottom of his heart ?
 Who is the man deserving of my blame
 When I shall make inquiry of his acts ?
 Who would do better if he shunned the world
 Because his quiet days are at an end ?
 What maketh for our happiness in life,
 And what do we recall most willingly ?
 Which is the time to praise ? What profiteth
 Us most ? Who is the dearest of our friends,
 Whose voice doth make a pleasance of the heart ?
 Who is the man with most friends in the world,
 That joy in him in public and in private ?
 Who too is he that hath most enemies,
 And most malignantly disposed to him ?¹
 What is the thing, the most injurious,
 For which when done there is good cause to weep ?
 Of all the things that mortals cherish here
 What is the most unstable of them all ?

¹ Couplet omitted.

Who is the tyrant that is unashamed,
 The man most loveless and irreverent ?
 Whose words produce most ruin in the world,
 And cause the greatest trouble to his friends ?
 What is the matter that entaileth shame,
 And evil on a man through his own words ? ”

For one whole day till night rose o'er the hills
 The sage's words produced no weariness,
 But when the darkness brought the time for lights
 The chiefs' heads darkened with bewilderment,
 And, when the Sháh grew weary of his words,
 He paused for a reply. The great Hurmuzd
 Rose to his feet and fitly praised the Sháh :—
 “ Ne'er may the Sháh be lacking to the world,
 But still abide upon the imperial throne ;
 Ne'er may we see the crown, the royal state,
 And throne of ivory, devoid of thee ;
 In their excusings may the strong be dust
 Before thee, heaven thine antidote from harm.
 Now will I make reply to Búzurjmihr,
 And solve his questions with a right good will.
 The sage first questioned me concerning sons,
 And so it is with them I must begin.
 A son doth make his father glad of heart,
 And freeth it from griefs, if he affect
 His sire, incline to goodness, and be just.
 Next, of the pitiable man, for whom
 The eyelids drop their tears : this is the magnate
 Whose fortune hath been scattered and he now
 Is thrall to one unworthy. This man's case
 Is one to be deplored with bitterness,
 Because he hath a miscreant for his lord.
 Again, the man that doeth benefits
 To thankless folk is all solicitude,
 And one forgetful of good done to him
 Would make a fool of wisdom. Then the sage

C. 1785

Inquired for whom 'tis goodlier to seek
 A resting-place by flight from tyranny ?
 The wise man is at liberty to quit
 The country where the monarch is not just ;
 Escape is needful from an unjust king,
 Because he bringeth Doomsday on the world.
 The sage inquired : ' In what rejoicest thou ? '
 'Tis in a brother or some charming fere.
 He then inquired : ' What is the time to praise ? '
 The time when we are quit of enemies :
 'Tis well to praise that ever more and more.
 Moreover for thy question touching friends,
 'Tis good to have the aidance of all such.
 If they be wealthy shelter 'neath their cloaks,
 And toil with them if they be mendicants.
 The humbler and the nobler that one is
 The more do his friends' hearts rejoice in him.
 The sage next asketh me : ' Who hath a foe
 By whom his heart is ever vexed and hurt ? '
 The man whose tongue is bold to utter ill
 Is very apt to make him enemies.¹
 ' What is of things the most injurious,'
 Thou saidest, ' and at last a cause for tears ? '
 When passion hath the mastery of thy heart
 It passeth with the passing of a breath,
 But with fruition cometh penitence ;
 So handle not the blossom of desire.
 ' What,' he inquired, ' is that inconstant thing
 Whose feet I seek to clutch and grasp its head ? '
 It is the friendship of a foolish man
 Of evil nature and unstable counsels ;
 And furthermore he saith : ' Who is the tyrant
 That is all shameless and remediless ? '
 Call him remediless if he use guile,
 A tyrant if he acteth shamelessly.

¹ Four couplets omitted.

As for the man whose very trade is lies,
I term him tyrannous and despicable.

‘ Whose words,’ thou saidest, ‘ are the cause of ruin,
Cause grief and harm but leave the speaker scath-
less ? ’

The traitor and the worthless double dealer
Fill wise men’s hearts with pain. The sage in-
quired :—

‘ What is the fault that causeth one most shame,
And maketh him repent of his own words ? ’
The foolish talker’s who doth bear himself
Vaingloriously within the sight of men,
But is, when he is private and alone,
Repentant for the words that he hath spoken,
Yet, when he next shall speak, will boast again.
The man without accomplishment is honoured
If he exceedeth not his limitations.

Those were the questions, these are my replies.
The blessings of the world be on the Sháh,
May all tongues speak according to his will,
And may his noble heart be glad and blest.”

The king of kings was lost in wonderment
At him and lauded him right royally ;
All were rejoiced that were assembled there,
The monarch’s heart was set at large from care.

C. 1786

§ 6

*How Núshírwán appointed Hurmuzd as his Successor
and gave him parting Counsels*

Then by the Sháh’s command they wrote a patent
That gave Hurmuzd the throne and crown, and
when

The wind had dried that paper wrought in Chín

They set a seal of musk thereon. The Sháh,
 In presence of the magnates and shrewd sages,
 Charged the high priest therewith. I, by the grace
 Of the victorious monarch of the world,
 Put into verse this act of Núshírwán's.

The world in practice doth belie its show ;

Beneath 'tis naught but dolour and chagrin,
 But, whether thou hast crown or toil and woe,
 Thou ne'ertheless must quit this Wayside Inn.
 Peruse a letter of the kings of yore,

And see if Núshírwán hath any peer
 For justice, rede, festivity, and war,
 Yet, his day done, he found no tarriance here.
 So turn from feast and pleasure, and be wise,

Thou agéd dotard and impenitent !
 The world may still look freshly to thine eyes

When in thy cups thou scornest to repent ;
 Yet still, if thou be wise, repent anon ;

The man of Faith is well advised for aye ;
 The seasons of thine age will soon be gone,
 Spring, Summer-tide, and Autumn pass away !
 Then when thy body is in dust below
 Think whither that pure soul of thine will go !

What was it that the agéd chronicler
 Said of the testament of Núshírwán ?
 C. 1787 When the responses of Hurmuzd were ended
 The high priest entered on a new discourse.
 The Sháh bade, and the counsellors and scribes
 Wrote out on silk a gracious document
 From Núshírwán to young Hurmuzd, beginning
 With praise of the All-just and then proceeding :—
 “ This counsel of the offspring of Kubád
 Hear graciously and write upon thy heart,
 Which haply through these words of mine may live.
 Know that this world is faithless, O my son !
 And full of toil and trouble, pain and bale.

Whenever thou are joying therein and when
 Thy heart is free from time's distemperature
 That happiness hath no abiding-place,
 And thou must quit this Wayside Hostelry.
 As I resign the world to thee with justice
 Thou must thyself resign it to another.
 Since both by bright day and by longsome night
 My thoughts are busied with mine own departure
 I seek a head fit for the royal crown
 To be a diadem on every head.
 We have six sons—the Lustre of our heart—
 Wise, generous, and just. We have made choice
 Of thee because thou art the eldest-born,
 A wise man and the adornment of the crown.
 Kubád, the well beloved, had four score years
 What time he spake to me of sovereignty ;
 Now I have come to seventy years and four,
 And I have made thee monarch in the world.
 Herein mine aim hath been but peace and weal
 So that I might have worship after death.
 My hope is that almighty God will make thee
 All glad and fortunate. If by thy justice
 Folk are secure through thee thou wilt thyself
 Repose in peace, glad through thine own just
 dealing,
 And for thy good works done win Paradise,
 For he is blest that sowed but seed of good.
 See that thou ne'er lose patience ; haste is ill
 In kings. The world-lord that is shrewd and learned
 Will be in estimation all his years.
 In no way go about to compass lies,
 Else will the visage of thy fortune pale.
 Keep haste afar both from thy heart and brain ;
 The wisdom that is joined to haste will slumber.
 Incline toward the good and strive therefor,
 And list the sage's rede in weal and woe.

Ill must not compass thee about, for ill
 Will verily result in ill to thee.
 Let both thy raiment and thy food be pure,
 And keep thy father's counsels still in mind.
 Make God thy refuge and incline to Him
 As thou wouldest have Him for thy guide. When
 thou
 Shalt make the world all prosperous by thy justice
 Thy treasury will prosper, fortune joy
 In thee. Reward men when they act aright ;
 Wait not till good men's toil hath waxen old.
 Make glad the men of parts and have them near
 thee,
 But keep the world dark to the ill-disposed.
 In all affairs take counsel with the sage,
 And fret not at the toils of sovereignty.
 Whenas the wise hath access to thee, throne
 With troops and treasure will continue thine.
 As for thy subjects, suffer none of them
 To be in cheerless case. The potentates
 And nobles of thy realm must all partake
 Thy good, but let the ignoble share it not,
 And trust not aught to one that is unjust.
 Give all thine ear and heart to mendicants,
 And let their sorrows be thy sorrows too.
 The chief that of his own accord is just
 Will please the world as well as please himself.
 Bar not thy treasury to men of worth,
 But act with bounty to the virtuous ;
 Still if thine enemy become thy friend
 Sow not thy seed of good on that salt soil.
 If thou shalt follow this advice of ours
 Thy crown will be exalted evermore.
 May He that giveth good wish well to thee,
 Thy throne be wisdom and thy crown success.
 God grant that thou mayst not forget my words

C. 1788

Though thou be far removéd from my sight.
 May thy head flourish and thy heart be glad,
 Thy person pure and far from hurt of foes.
 May wisdom be thy watchman evermore,
 And righteousness the subject of thy thoughts.
 When I shall pass away from this wide world
 A goodly palace must be built for me,
 Secluded somewhere from the haunts of men,
 And where the swift-winged vulture flieth not¹—
 A palace lifted toward revolving heaven,
 And in its height ten lassoes long and more,
 And thereupon let there be limned my court,
 The great men, and the warriors of my host.
 Let tapestries of every kind be there
 In plenty, strewings, colour and perfume.
 Embalm my corpse with camphor and arrange
 A crown of musk upon the head thereof.
 Bring forth five pieces never handled yet
 Of cloth of gold and of brocade of Chín,
 And garb me in them in the Kaian mode,
 As is the usance of Sásánian Sháhs,²
 By which same token make an ivory throne
 With crown suspended o'er the ivory,
 And let the golden vessels that I used,
 The goblets and the censers and the cups—
 A score filled with rosewater, saffron, wine,
 Ten score with camphor, musk, and ambergris—
 Be set upon my left hand and my right,
 No more or less, for such is my command.
 Drain from my trunk the blood and afterwards
 Let the dry space be filled with musk and camphor,
 And lastly block the passage to my throne—
 A passage that no other Sháh may see.
 That court will be conducted otherwise,

C. 1789

¹ This is not at all in accord to Pársí notions. Cf. Vol. i. p. 81
 s.v. *Dakhma*. ² Reading with P.

And none will have e'en access unto us.
 Let those among my sons and noble kin,
 Who feel my death as a calamity,
 Refrain from feast and pleasure for two months,
 For that is usual at the Sháh's decease,
 And 'twould be seemly for the good to drop
 A tear on this, the Great King's, testament.
 Depart not from the bidding of Hurmuzd
 And breathe not save according to his will."

All o'er that testament shed many a tear,
 And Núshírwán survived it just a year.

§ 7

How Núshírwán had a Dream and how Búzurjmehr interpreted it as signifying the Appearance of Muhammad

In that year Núshírwán upon a night
 Amidst his prayers and praises had a dream,
 Wherein his lucid spirit saw in sleep
 A Sun rise in the night and therewithal
 Was an ascent that had two score degrees,
 Whose summit reached to Saturn in the ascendant.
 From the Hijáz in stately pomp and joy
 That Sun ascended that ascent, fulfilling
 The world with brilliancy from Káf to Káf,¹
 And everywhere converting grief to mirth,
 While all the horizons, whether far or near,
 Took lustre from its glory everywhere,
 And everywhere light entered save the hall
 Of Núshírwán which still abode in gloom.
 The Sháh rose from his sleep for half the night,
 And oped his lips to none on that affair,

¹ Káf=Alburz. See Vol. i. p. 71.

But when the sun unveiled its countenance
 He summoned to his presence Búzurjmihr.
 The king of kings in private to that sage
 Related what he had beheld in sleep,
 And Búzurjmihr, possessed of all the case,
 Considered all the dream from end to end,
 And thus replied : " O king of power supreme !
 In truth there is a mystery herein."

The king said : " Speak the truth because my life
 Is failing in my body for suspense."

Then Búzurjmihr spake thus : " O thou whose
 rede

Is higher than moon and sun ! this dream have I
 Well studied : mark the marvel of its meaning.
 From this day forth for forty years and more
 Among the Arabs one will rise to power,
 Who will adopt the way of righteousness,
 And turn aside from all deceit and loss.

He will confound the whole Faith of Zarduhsh.
 When he shall show the moon his finger-tip,
 His finger will divide it into two,
 And none will look upon his back in toil.
 The Jew and Christian shall withstand him not,
 And he will do away with former Faiths.
 He will ascend a triple-footed throne,
 And all the world will be advised by him.
 When he shall quit this Wayside Hostelry
 The treasure of his words will still remain.
 The world will joy in him from age to age,
 Save the Sháh's palace which the winds will scatter.
 When he is dead a scion of thy race
 Will have the tymbals, drums, and elephants.
 A host will come on him from the Hijáz,
 Though unpossessed of arms and equipage,
 Will cast him from the throne upon the dust,
 And fill the world with warriors. Then will cease

C. 1790

The observation of the feast of Sada,
 And every Fire-fane be a rubbish heap,
 Folk will no longer worship Fire and Sun,
 And all the fortunes of the brave will slumber.
 Jámásp himself declared before Gushtásp
 This secret, giving this interpretation."

When Núshírwán heard this from Búzurjmihr
 The favour of his countenance was changed ;
 He was all day the mate of pain and grief,
 And slumbered, when night came, worn out by care.¹
 Now when three watches of the night had passed
 There went up such a panic-stricken cry
 That thou hadst said : " The world is all o'er-
 turned ! "

And then one said : " The hall is rent in twain ! "

Thereat the Sháh's heart started from its place,
 And in the uttermost bewilderment
 He spake concerning it to Búzurjmihr,
 Beginning with the rending of the hall,
 Which when the sage had looked upon he spake
 On this wise, saying : " O Sháh Núshírwán !
 This outcry rose by reason of the Sun
 That thou beheldest in thy dreams last night.
 Know that thy palace gave a cry what time
 That moon-like babe was born, and presently
 A horseman with two steeds will come to say :—
 ' Fire-worship is abandoned to the blast ! ' "

Thereat, as swiftly as the flying dust,
 A horseman came with tidings : " Even now
 Ázargashasp is cold ! "

The Sháh's heart straitened
 Because of it ; he sighed continually.
 Then Búzurjmihr : " O Sháh ! why mourn there-
 for ?

¹ Or, with the change of a diacritical point :—
 And when the night came, could not sleep for care.

What matter this world's griefs and joys to thee
When thou art gone and parted far by time ? ”

The Sháh survived not this event for long.
He died : the world bewailed him. Búzurjmihr
Veiled his own visage in the dust within
Four se'nights of the passing of the Sháh,
Who left behind this record when he went.
Be thy part to preserve his monument,
For since the turning sky proved so unfair
To him expect no love or justice there.¹

C. 1791

And now the crown and throne I decorate
Of Sháh Húrmuzd, and seat him on the state.

¹ The reign ends here in the original.

XLII

HURMUZD, THE SON OF NŪSHÍRWĀN

HE REIGNED TWELVE¹ YEARS

ARGUMENT

Hurmuzd, on succeeding to the throne, makes fair promises but soon belies them and puts to death his father's ministers. Afterwards, perturbed by a prophecy, he repents, and two stories are told of his even-handed justice. War breaks out and Bahrám Chúbína comes upon the scene. He is appointed commander-in-chief and defeats the Turks under King Sáwa and his son Parmúda, but after having been shamefully insulted by the Sháh he rebels—a course strongly opposed by his sister Gurdya. He contrives to make Hurmuzd suspicious of his own son Khusrau Parwíz who escapes. Hurmuzd is dethroned and blinded, and Khusrau Parwíz returns.

NOTE

Hurmuzd (Hormisdas IV., A.D. 578-590) may not have been so black as he has been painted but his reign, to say the least of it, stands in melancholy contrast to that of his father whose precepts he disregarded, whose system of administration he did his best to overturn, whose trusted ministers he put to death, and whose practice of personally leading his troops he made no attempt to emulate.² He had the good fortune to possess a general at once brave, able, and apparently quite loyal whom he treated with the basest and most insolent ingratitude, wrecking his own

¹ Fourteen according to P.

² RSM, p. 473.

reign thereby and inflicting many wounds upon his country. The romantic history of that general, as told in the Sháhnáma, is one of the finest passages in the poem, and the poet was fortunate in having such to lay before his readers as he was nearing the end of his great undertaking.¹

§ 2. Mákh, the marchlord of Harát, who seems to have been known as Khurásání in accordance to Persian custom in such matters, appears to be the father of, or identical with, one of the four compilers of the prose Sháhnáma for Abú Mansúr which Firdausí used as his chief authority. In the Introduction to the present Translation the name of this particular compiler is given, in accordance to the text of C., as Táj son of Khurásání of Harát² but according to Nöldeke³ the Táj is quite uncertain.

§ 3. Núshírwán had based his system of administration upon the nobility. We have seen in a characteristic anecdote how he refused to consult his own convenience by accepting a loan of money from a shoemaker.⁴ Hurmuzd, not having his father's ability, found the system irksome and consequently was inclined to favour the lower at the expense of the higher orders. Accordingly later on we have two stories of his even-handed justice.⁵ A justice, however, which is said to have put to death 13,600 of the nobility and priesthood, and imprisoned or degraded many others in the course of a few years is somewhat suspect.⁶

Burzmihr seems to be identical with Búzurjmihr who, we were told at the end of the last reign,⁷ died within a month of Núshírwán. According to Mas'údí Búzurjmihr survived to be the chief minister of Khusrau Parwíz who after thirteen years of reign disgraced him and treated him even worse than Núshírwán is said to have done on one occasion,⁸ the two accounts no doubt being variants of the same story. Firdausí tells us that one of the three scribes was young,⁹ and that Búzurjmihr was a youth at his lessons when he first attracted Núshírwán's attention.¹⁰ He need not have been an old man at the time of that Sháh's death. The probability is, however, that he was executed along with other ministers by Hurmuzd as the text seems to imply.

¹ See p. 96 *seq.*

⁴ p. 48.

⁷ p. 69.

¹⁰ Vol. vii. p. 283.

² Vol. i. p. 67.

⁵ p. 91.

⁸ P. 4 *seq.*, MM, ii. 224.

Cf. p. 313.

³ NIN, pp. 14 *note* 15.

⁶ NT, p. 267.

⁹ p. 81.

§ 5. The account in the Sháhnáma and in Oriental historians of these wars seems much exaggerated. The war with Rúm was nothing new; it had been going on from the days of Núshírwán and was not specially active at the moment. The Arab and Khazar invasions require further confirmation and the latter, it may be suggested, was merely a patriotic invention to cover up an unfortunate incident that befell the Persians South of the Caucasus after the conclusion of the war with the Turks (p. 76). This last war has generally been taken to have been waged between the Persians and the Khán who was a relation by marriage of Hurmuzd and would be certain to bring great forces into the field. It appears, however, that Sáwa is merely the Persian form of "Chao-wou"—the name given in Chinese official reports of the period to the princes of small states on the Oxus that were more or less subject to the Khán who does not appear to have been concerned in the matter at all.¹

§ 6. In the story of Mihrán Sitád's embassage as given in the Sháhnáma the prophecy is limited to the outcome of the marriage of Núshírwán with the Khán's daughter.² It afforded, however, a convenient starting-point for the Romance that gathered round the heroic personality of Bahrám Chúbína and the reference to him was interpolated accordingly.

§ 7. Bahrám Chúbína, whose story and that of his sister Gurdyá extend through the rest of this and far into the succeeding reign, had been marchlord of Rai and governor of the North, apparently, under Núshírwán.³ He continued to hold the same posts under Hurmuzd.⁴ He was a native of Rai, sprung from a race of marchlords and army-chiefs, a Mihrán, and is said to have been descended from Gurgín⁵—all important indications to the student of the Sháhnáma. Rai was the traditional seat of Arsacid power.⁶ Shápúr of Rai, an army-chief, who was called in by Kubád to overthrow Súfarai of the race of Káwa, also was a Mihrán and descended from Mihrak.⁷ The Mihrán clan played an important part in Sásánian times and the name often recurs.⁸ Gurgín, son of Milád, was the villain of the story of Bízhan

¹ NT, p. 269 and *notes*. RSM, p. 467.

² Vol. vii. p. 354.

³ ZT, ii. 252. Cf. Vol. vii. p. 214.

⁴ ZT, ii. 253.

⁵ ZT, ii. 252.

⁶ Vol. vi. pp. 201, 215, 223.

⁷ Vol. vii. pp. 185, 192.

⁸ *Id.*

and Manízha.¹ The point is this. The words Mílág, Mihrak, and Mihrán are closely allied, probably mere variants, are reminiscent of Parthian times and under the Sásánian Dynasty represent the vanquished Arsacid element.² That element recovered sufficiently to exercise much political power as in the case of the Mihráns.

A Ruhhám of that stock is said to have been influential in placing Píruz upon the throne.³ If they could not be kings themselves they aspired to be king-makers and ministers. There was rivalry between them and families of purer Íránian stock, and the Sháhs, as in the instance given above, availed themselves of it to serve their own ends. Such rivalry, however, was a subsidiary matter; the great antagonism between Arsacid and Sásánian, though latent, still persisted and is indicated plainly enough in the course of the story of Bahrám Chúbína.

Nöldeke's account of that story, which is a blend of history and romance, is briefly as follows. It was compiled in Pahlaví shortly before the end of the Sásánian Dynasty, about the beginning of the reign of Yazdagird III., A.D. 632, and was translated into Arabic by a certain Jabala bin Sálim of whom nothing more is known save that he was "the writer of Hishám" who can be no other than the Arabic historian Hishám Ibn Al-Kalbí. Hishám died about A.D. 820. The story thus became known to the Muhammadans and was woven into the general presentment of Sásánian history.⁴ We may add that Tabarí, who was born some eighteen years after Hishám's death and died A.D. 923, gives the historical nucleus of the story in his history. The redactor of his work into Persian (A.D. 963) states that as his Arabic authority has not given the life of Bahrám Chúbína in its entirety he gives it from the book of the history of Persia where he found it more complete.⁵ This version agrees very closely with Firdausí's. Both are derived from the Persian Book of Kings in one or another of its later forms. Which the redactor of Tabarí used we cannot say, but Firdausí, we may assume, used the modern Persian prose Sháhnáma of Abú Mansúr⁶ for which a new translation of the story had been made from the

¹ Vol. iii. p. 289 *seq.*

² Vol. iii. p. 11. vi. 256, vii. 156.

³ Vol. vii. p. 156.

⁴ NT, p. 474.

⁵ ZT, ii. 253.

⁶ See Vol. i. p. 67.

original Pahlaví.¹ This may account for the difference in some of the proper names that exists between Firdausí's version and that in the Persian Tabarí. In this and some other respects the latter is of decided help to the understanding of the former. Attention will be called to such matters in subsequent notes.

It is evident that the redactors of the Pahlaví original into Arabic or Persian took good care to leave little repugnant to Muhammadan Faith or morals. Even the statement in Tabarí and its Persian version that Gurdya was the wife as well as the sister of Bahrám Chúbína² disappears in Firdausí.

Yalán-sína—a prominent character in the Romance—is called Mardánsháh in the Persian Tabarí. He was the brother³ and a firm supporter of Bahrám Chúbína. Another brother—Gurdwí—took the opposite side and remained loyal to Khusrau Parwíz. The sympathies of Gurdya, Bahrám Chúbína's sister, though she associated with him till his death, were also legitimist.

§ 8. Here we have another instance of a Mihrán in high office.⁴ Probably he was the successor of Ízid Gashasp, the scribe, who had been put to death by Hurmuzd early in his reign⁵ and is to be carefully distinguished from the general of the same name in Bahrám Chúbína's army, which is not always done in the text of C.⁶

In the Persian Tabarí the purveyor of sheep's heads is said to have been naked and Bahrám Chúbína to have speared two of the heads one of which fell back into the tray. The interpretation was that he would have to deal with two kings of whom one would be killed while the other would be restored to his royalty. The nudity signified that Bahrám Chúbína would revolt.⁷

According to the Persian Tabarí, Hurmuzd, on hearing of the invasion of Sáwa Sháh, sent Kharrád, son of Barzín, with an escort to him to delay his advance while the expedition under the command of Bahrám Chúbína was being got ready. The envoy managed to keep Sáwa at Balkh for a whole year.⁸

Faghfúr, or Faghfúr of Chín, hitherto in the Sháhnáma a

¹ NT, p. 475.

² NT, p. 279. ZT, ii. 303.

³ NT, p. 478.

⁴ Cf. p. 72.

⁵ p. 83.

⁵ Cf. pp. 75, 150 note, 158 note.

⁶ ZT, ii. 258.

⁷ Id, 259.

dynastic title, here appears as the name of the younger son of Sáwa perhaps to add to the latter's importance. In the Persian *Tabarí* the governor of Khurásán takes the part here played by Faghfúr.¹

§ 12. In the Persian *Tabarí* Bahrám Chúbína has the dream while dozing on horseback after having been engaged in arraying the troops all night, and in the same authority bars the road of retreat with five hundred horse,² while the only sorcery is in connexion with the dream.

According to *Tabarí*³ the shot that slew king Sáwa was one of three that gave renown to archers in Persian story. The others were that of Árish⁴ and that of Súfaraí who in the war undertaken to avenge Píruz shot at a chief in the vanguard of Khúshnawáz and pierced his horse's head with an arrow. The chief was taken prisoner by Súfaraí who sent him back to Khúshnawáz with instructions to report the matter, and Khúshnawaz was so impressed that he sued for peace.⁵ Neither of these instances is mentioned in the *Sháhnáma* though it celebrates in a famous passage Rustam's shot in the fight with Ashkabús⁶ and Bahrám Gúr's skill in archery.⁷

Bahrám, the son of Siyáwúsh, had married a niece of Bahrám Chúbína.⁸

§ 14. The episode of the garden is not in the Persian *Tabarí*.

§ 17. The above remark applies to the quarrel between Bahrám Chúbína and Parmúda, and to the former's retention of some of the booty.

The Persian *Tabarí* makes Mardánsháh (Yalán-síná), not Ízid Gashasp, conduct the Khán, the other prisoners, and the booty to Irán.⁹

§ 18. The *Sháhnáma* here seems to confuse Ízid Gashasp with the scribe of that name executed by Hurmuzd.¹⁰ It is clear from the Persian *Tabarí*¹¹ that the person consulted by the Sháh about Bahrám Chúbína was his confidant and minister Áyín Gashasp who in the Persian *Tabarí* is named Yazdánbakhsh. Ízid and Yazdán both mean God which also caused confusion and when it became hopeless the form Áyín Gashasp was adopted to get out of the difficulty.

¹ *Id.*

² *Id.* 261.

³ NT. p. 271.

⁴ See Vol. v. p. 12.

⁵ NT. p. 127. ZT. ii. 143.

⁶ Vol. iii. pp. 109, 181.

⁷ Vol. vi. 383. vii. 54, 55, 80.

⁸ ZT. ii. 262. Cf. NT. 281, 282 note.

⁹ ZT. ii. pp. 265, 266.

¹⁰ p. 83.

¹¹ ZT. ii. p. 266.

§§ 19–21. The definite accusation of withholding some of the booty made by the archscribe (Mihrán) against Bahrám Chúbína is absent in the Persian Tabarí which merely gives the vague insinuation of the minister Yazdánbaksh which rouses suspicion in Hurmuzd's mind and causes him to send Mardánsháh back to the commander-in-chief with a chain, distaff-case and cotton, and an insulting letter.¹ A similar insult is recorded to have been offered by the Empress Sophia to the exarch Narses when he was superseded and bidden return to his place among the maidens of the palace where a distaff should again be placed in his hand.²

The treatment of Bahrám Chúbína by Hurmuzd, though foolish enough in any circumstances, was not quite so unreasonable and motiveless as it appears to be in the accounts of oriental writers. In A.D. 589 after the successful conclusion of Bahrám Chúbína's expedition Hurmuzd conceived the idea of renewing the Lazic war which his father had abandoned in A.D. 562,³ and sent Bahrám Chúbína to conduct the campaign. That chief, however, was defeated by the Romans in a battle on the Araxes and his disgrace followed.⁴

§ 22. Here for once the Sháhnáma seems to join hands with Western Romance. The Adventure, *mutatis mutandis*, reads as if it had been taken bodily from some mediæval romance of chivalry.

According to the Persian Tabarí both Kharrád, son of Barzín, and the archscribe were present on the occasion.⁵

§ 23. Here again there seems to be some confusion in connexion with Ízid Gashasp. He is identified with the archscribe in the heading. Moreover he is pursued, captured, and brought back to Bahrám Chúbína, who lets him off very easily, because he is wanted for service with that paladin. In the Persian Tabari *both* the fugitives make good their escape to Hurmuzd.⁶ That version does not know of Ízid Gashasp, who is mentioned, however, in Tabarí.⁷

§ 24. In the Persian Tabarí Bahrám Chúbína sends Hurmuzd twelve thousand hangers with bent points to represent all his twelve thousand troops.⁸

Bahrám Chúbína is here described as the son of Gashasp.

¹ *Id.*

² GDF, v. 336.

³ Vol. vii. p. 215.

⁴ NT, p. 272 *note.* RSM, p. 469

⁵ ZT, ii. 267.

⁶ *Id.* 268.

⁷ NT, p. 278.

⁸ ZT, ii. 267.

Tabarí makes him the son of Bahrám-Gushnasp,¹ the Persian version of Bahrám,² and Mas'údī of the nickname—Chúbín.³

§ 25. Ízid Gashasp is regarded as dealing with both sides because of the malicious speech that he is represented to have made about Bahrám Chúbína.⁴

The debate is not in the Persian Tabarí.

§ 26. The letter to the Khán is not in the Persian Tabarí.

Historically Bahrám Chúbína issued coins in his own name but apparently not in that of Khusráu Parwiz.⁵

§ 27. The authorities differ as to whether Gustaham was imprisoned as well as Bandwí. The Oriental say both, the Greek Bandwí only,⁶ which makes the revolt more intelligible.

§ 1

The Prelude

The Summer⁷ mocked the ruddy apple-tree,
And treated fruit and leaf with raillery :—
“ As for the posy that in Spring of late
Thou barest on thy breast intoxicate,
With just a blush remembered in its bloom,
And branches yielding exquisite perfume,
How didst thou find a purchaser to buy,
And do thy marketing so readily ?
Those emeralds and rubies who bestowed
On thee that benderest underneath the load ?
Sooth ! thou hast bartered blossom for the grace
Of colour wherewithal to deck thy face,⁸
But brought me to despair who cannot see
Thy blossoms for thy flaunting bravery.”

Sweet Spring, my charmer ! whither hast thou fled,

¹ NT, p. 270.

² ZT, ii. 252.

³ MM, ii. 213. Cf. p. 98 note.

⁴ p. 150 and note.

⁵ RSM, p. 471 note.

⁶ Id.

⁷ Tamúz, the Syrian month of July, in the original.

⁸ Three couplets omitted.

And left the glories of the garden dead ?
 Howbeit Autumn hath a scent of thine,
 And I will drink to thee in new-made wine ;
 Though thou art sallow I will praise thee yet,
 And deck thee like Hurmuzd's own coronet,
 For now my mart is brisk. Art thou to see,
 When I am dead and gone, no trace of me ?¹

§ 2

How Hurmuzd ascended the Throne and harangued the Chiefs

A marchlord of Harát, well shot in age,
 There was, in all approven and beseen,
 A ready speaker, Mákh by name, world-sage,
 Still flourishing and of exalted mien ;
 And it was him I questioned fain to find
 What record of Hurmuzd he had in mind
 When that Sháh filled the throne of equity :—
 That eld of Khurásán thus answered me :—
 Whenas that Sháh sat on the famous state
 He first gave praises to almighty God,
 The Arbitrator of fortune, and then said :—
 “ We will renown the throne and hold in honour
 The men of high degree. We will enfold
 The world beneath our wings, as did our sire,
 In goodly case and Glory. We will make
 Offenders quake and ease the oppressed, be patient
 If one doth ill and succour him in trouble.
 The prop of majesty is clemency
 With bounty, justice, and right conduct. Know
 That good and evil never are concealed

C. 1792

¹ Division of text as in P.

From Him who is the Maker of the world.
 Our ancestors—crown-wearers in their time,
 Which through their justice had its share of praise—
 Sought but for mildness, equity, and greatness,
 With valour, aptitude, their lieges' service,
 Their lords' observance, and to vex their foes.
 In every clime to act and to command,
 Power, counsel, and authority to treat,
 Are mine. The good affect a heaven-sent Sháh.
 Now mercy is the capital of such ;
 The age becometh full of ease through bounty.
 The mendicants will I entreat with kindness,
 And will watch o'er the rich. The self-made man
 Shall have a prosperous commerce with ourselves.
 Withhold not your desires from my fond heart ;
 I will abate with ease whatever cause
 For fear ye entertain. Ye prosperous !
 Joy in my crown and throne. Amid the great
 Mine is the lustre in that mercy, justice,
 And bounty are mine own. Grow still in kindness,
 And banish greed and vengeance from your hearts.
 They that fear God will see not evil fortune,
 So strive ye all, both small and great, to win
 The favour of the Maker of the world.
 Again, let not the heart of one possessed
 Of wisdom contemplate ingratitude,
 And when thou benefitest other folk
 Let there be no idea of recompense.
 Mix not with men that speak deceitfully,
 For what they utter is for outward show,
 And if thy king be just think thou no shame
 Concerning him, for while thou callest him
 Unwise he may be studious of the words
 Of former Sháhs,¹ and when his heart is prompted
 To mercy sow not thou the seed of guile

¹ Reading with P.

Upon the earth. The spurner of our counsel
Will throw away the benefits of fortune.

C. 1793

The approval of thy Sháh sufficeth thee,
While to resist him is the road to ruin.
His harshness in exhorting thee is kind,
For he would break with thee if he were wroth.
Begrudge no efforts in the cause of good,
And joy not in injustice and in wealth.
When in the world thou hast thy heart's desire,
And reached what thou wast instant to attain,
Still, when thou don'st the crown of seventy years,
Thou yieldest all thy winnings to the foe.
My heart is greatly troubled for the poor,
And I would have them ever in my thoughts.
I ask the holy Fosterer for time
To render poor folk happy with my treasures ;
I will not bring the saintly heart to trouble.
If any by his monetary wealth
Shall grow too kinglike him will I abase :
No rival will I have. From first to last,
In public utterance and secret thought,
We are the same. The Maker's benison
Be yours, your earth the circling vault of heaven."

Now when the assembly heard his words each man
Grew thoughtful, those of wealth were filled with
fear,
And tyrants' hearts were rent, while for their part
The sage and mendicant waxed glad of heart.

§ 3

How Hurmuzd slew Izid Gashasp, Zarduhsh, Símáh Barzín and Bahrám Ázarmihán, his Father's Ministers¹

The Sháh ruled well until he felt secure
 And had attained his ends but then he raged,
 Displayed his evil nature, left the path
 Of right and, as he had determined, slew
 Those most in honour with his father—men,
 Who, innocent and happy, feared no ill.

Among the scribes of Núshírwán were three,
 Two old, one young, their names Izid Gashasp,
 Burzmihr—a learned scribe of Grace and presence—
 And Máh Ázar, wise, shrewd, and prosperous.
 The three had been vizirs and ministers
 Before the throne of Núshírwán. Hurmuzd
 Was longing to bring ruin on all three
 Because he feared that they might prove ingrate.
 Without a cause he raised his hand against
 Izid Gashasp, bound and imprisoned him.
 The high priest's heart was straitened and his cheek
 Wan with anxiety, for he was good,
 An ancient named Zarduhsh, and at the bondage
 Of scribe Izid Gashasp it was as though
 His own heart had been arrow-pierced.

C. 1794

Now when
 Izid Gashasp had passed a day untended,
 Without food, clothes or solace, a friend
 Conveyed for him this message from the prison
 To the high priest : “ O thou that to the captive
 Art skin and marrow ! here am I within

¹ The heading in the original seems to have been carelessly compiled. The one above has been adopted to suit the account in the text.

The prison of the Sháh without attendance,
 And none can come to me. I crave for food ;
 A famished paunch increaseth my distress.
 Send to me what is fit and, when I die,
 Some linen¹ and a stitcher for my shroud.”

The high priest’s heart was grieved at his affliction,

His message, place, and lodging. He replied :—
 “ Complain not of the matter of thy bondage
 If thou art not in jeopardy of life.”

Albeit the message left him broken-hearted,
 And troubled for himself. He thought : “ If news
 Shall reach this Graceless and ungenerous Sháh
 That his high priest hath sent things to the prison,
 My life and body are not worth a mite ;
 This world-lord will destroy me and will turn
 A livid face toward me in his wrath.”

Yet through affection for Izid Gashasp,
 The scribe, his heart was wrung, his face like gall.
 He bade his heedful cook take to the prison
 Food for the prisoner and afterwards
 Gat on an Arab steed and went to him.
 The keeper of the prison paled with fright,
 On seeing the high priest, but dared not say :—
 “ Go not within the prison for this king
 Is self-willed and a novice.”

Bathed in tears
 That agéd man alighted from his steed,
 And visited Izid Gashasp. They clasped
 Each other in a close embrace, all anguish,
 The lashes of their eyes like clouds in Spring,
 And held talk of the Sháh’s malignity
 Until words failed them. Then the board was
 spread
 Before those holy men who next began

¹ Reading with P.

To mutter prayers with sacred twigs in hand,
And afterwards Izid Gashasp in whispers
Conveyed his wishes, while the high priest heark-
ened,

As to his hoarded treasure and dínárs,
His mansions, palaces, and property,
And said : “ O noble man ! on going hence
Say to Hurmuzd from me : ‘ Though thou mayst C. 1795
spurn

My words yet think upon the toils and care
That I supported with Sháh Núshírwán,
And how I cherished thee too on my breast.
My recompense is chains and fear of worse,
And I shall show God on the Judgment Day
A guiltless heart aggrieved against the king.’ ”

Now when the high priest had gone home a spy
Departed hastily and told the news
To Sháh Hurmuzd whose heart conceived fell
schemes.

He did not spare Izid Gashasp but sent,
And slew him in the prison, heard reports
At large about the high priest, made no sign,
And pondered how by fair means or by foul
To slay him ; then gave orders to the cook
To mingle bane in secret with some dish,
And when the high priest came at audience-time
To pay his duty to the illustrious king,
Hurmuzd said : “ Tarry here to-day for I
Have a new cook.”

The high priest sat ; they spread
The board ; he paled ; he felt that 'twas his last,
And so it proved. The cooks brought up the meats,
And Sháh Hurmuzd partook of all in turn,
But when he had the poisoned dish brought in
The high priest glanced thereat and looked again.
There was an ill surmise in his pure heart :—

“ His remedy is poison in that dish ! ”

Hurmuzd, on seeing this, said not a word,
But stretched his hand out to that dish of bane,
And, in accordance to the use of kings
When paying servants honour and regard,
Put his own noble fingers to the board,
And, having taken marrow from the dish,
Said to the high priest : “ O thou honest man !
I made this luscious morsel for thyself,
So open wide thy mouth and take this food,
And such should be thy nourishment henceforth.”

The archmage answered : “ By thy life and head,
And may thy head and crown endure for ever,
Bid me not eat it ; I have had enough,¹
So do not press me further.”

Said Hurmuzd :—

“ By sun and moon, and by the purity
Of soul of him who is the Sháh and world-lord,
Thou shalt accept this morsel from my hand,
And frustrate not my wish herein.”

He answered :—

“ The Sháh hath bidden and I have no choice.”

C. 1796

He ate, then left the board, in sore distress,
And hurried home, spake of the poisoned food
To none but spread a robe and lay lamenting.
He ordered one to fetch an antidote
From those old hoards of his or from the city,
But it availed not aught, and bitterly
Complained he unto God against Hurmuzd.
The Sháh dispatched a trusty man to learn
The high priest’s state, the action of the poison,
And if the scheme had failed. Now when the
eye

Of the high priest beheld the messenger
Tears fell from his eyelashes down his cheeks.

¹Reading with P.

“ Go, tell Hurmuzd,” he said : ‘ Thy fortune changeth.

Hereafter, through thy mischievous designs,
Thou shalt be blind and shiftless in the world,
Thy foes shall have their hearts’ desire upon thee,
And lasting shame shall dog thy soul for this.
Soon wilt thou die and leave an evil name.
I go to lay my cause before the Judge,
Where we shall face each other. Never more
Sleep free from ill, for chastisement divine
Confronteth thee. I take my leave of thee,
Malignant man ! Ill done will bring thee ill.’ ”

The trusty envoy heard and went with tears
To take the king the message. He repented,
Writhed at the high priest’s righteous words but
saw

No way to cure that smart and deeply sighed.
Anon the high priest died, and all the wise
Wept o’er him sorely. In this world of pain
And toil why court renown and clutch at gain ?
The wise count breaths because no joys remain.

The high priest’s wretched end convulsed the realm
With grief, but that blood-shedding, brutal world-
lord

Recked not of evil fortune, girt his loins
For bloodshed, made Bahrám Ázarmihán
His tool, called him by night and made him kneel
Beside the throne, then said : “ Thou wouldest feel
safe

From evil treatment at my hands ? Then when
The sun is bright in heaven, and mountain-tops
Are shining like a back-plate, come among
The nobles of Írán and take thy stand
Before my throne. Then will I question thee
About Símáh Barzín : make answer boldly.
I shall inquire : ‘ What is this friend of thine,

An evil man or one that serveth God ?'

C. 1797 Reply : ' He is an evil man, a villain,
And sprung from Áhriman.' Then ask whatever
Thou wilt—a handmaid, signet, throne and crown.'"

Bahrám replied : " I will, and multiply
The ill a hundredfold."

The Sháh thus sought

An artifice to put Símáh Barzín,
One of the chiefs, beloved by Núshírwán—
That Lustre of the age—beyond the pale
Of sympathy.

Now when the Robe whose hue
Is ivory-bright grew visible, and Sol
Rose in the Sign of Gemini, the world-lord
Sat on the ivory throne, and o'er his head
They hung the costly crown. The Iránian chiefs
Met and drew up in rank before the court-gate.
The audience-chamberlain withdrew the curtain,
And all the throng approached the king. First came
Bahrám Ázarmihán, Símáh Barzín,
And valiant chiefs. Each took his proper seat,
The crowd still standing in the monarch's presence,
Who questioned thus Bahrám Ázarmihán :—
" Now doth Símáh Barzín, in presence here,
Deserve our wealth or is he troublesome,
Because the ill-disposed deserve not treasure ? "

Bahrám Ázarmihán well understood
The question of the monarch of the world,
Its base and motive : " We must weep therefor,
And from the ruler of the people I
Shall have at last a charnel but no shroud ! "

And thus he made response : " O noble Sháh !
Look for no goodness from Símáh Barzín,
For he hath wrecked Irán. Would that his body
Had neither brain nor skin ! He speaketh naught
But villainy and thus produceth strife."

Símáh Barzín, on hearing this, replied :—

“ My good old friend ! defame not thus my person,
And be not thus confederate with the Dív.

Since thou hast been my friend what words and
deeds

Of Áhri man hast thou perceived in me ? ”

Bahrám Ázarmihán thus answered him :—

“ Thou hast been scattering seed throughout the
world,

And thou wilt be the first to reap the crop.

Black smoke shall be thy portion of the fire,

For Núshírwán once summoned thee and me,

And made us kneel before the royal throne

With the high priest, Burzmihr, and with that chief

Of comely face, Ízid Gashasp, and asked :—

‘ Who doth deserve the imperial throne and who

Possesseth Grace ? On younger son or elder

Shall I bestow it ? Which is worthier

Of kingship ? ’

Then the rest of us arose,

C. 1798

And framed our tongues to utter this reply :—

‘ This man of Turkman kindred is unworthy ;

None would give aught for such a Sháh, for he

Is Khán-descended, is of evil nature,

And like his mother both in looks and bearing.’

Thou saidst : ‘ Hurmuzd is fit to be the Sháh,’

And now art guilty of the consequence.

For this cause have I testified against thee,

And opened thus my lips in thy dispraise.”

Hurmuzd at that archmage’s truthful words
Turned pale with shame. At night he sent them
both

To prison and for two nights made no sign

Withal, but on the third, what time the moon

Arose above the mountains, he dispatched

Símáh Barzín by slaying him within

The prison of the thieves yet gat thereby
 But toil and malison. On hearing how
 That man of honest heart had passed away
 Bahrám Ázarmihán sent to the Sháh
 A message saying : “ Thou whose crown is over
 The orbit of the moon ! thou knowest how much
 I have endured to keep thy secrets close,
 And ne'er was aught but well disposed to thee
 Before thy father, that illustrious Sháh.
 If thou wilt summon me and make me sit
 Beside the royal throne I will reveal
 A matter to thee in thine interest.
 Free me at once from bondage in the prison ;
 'Twill help Írán and keep the wise unscathed.”

Hurmuzd, when this came, chose a confidant
 To bring Bahrám Ázarmihán to him,
 And to that court renowned. The monarch sum-
 moned

Bahrám Ázarmihán when it was night,
 Caused him to kneel before the royal throne,
 And then said : “ Tell me what this matter is
 That will secure my life in happiness.”

He answered : “ In the royal treasury
 I have observed a plain black cabinet.
 Deposited within it is a casket,
 And therein is a document in Persian.
 'Tis written on white silk : the Íránians' hopes
 Are centred there. 'Twas written by thy sire,
 That Sháh and world-lord, and thou shouldest see
 it.”

Then to his treasurer, good at need, Hurmuzd
 Sent one to say : “ Seek in the ancient hoards
 A plain sealed cabinet and on the seal
 The name of Núshírwán, and may his soul
 Be ever young ! Dispatch and bring it me
 Ere night be past.”

The treasurer was prompt,
And brought it with the seal intact. The world-
 lord

C. 1799

Oped it, invoking oftentimes the while
The name of Núshírwán. He saw within
A casket, which was also sealed, wherefrom
He eagerly took forth the piece of silk,
And saw the characters of Núshírwán
Inscribed thereon, and thus the writing ran :—

“Hurmuzd for two years more than ten
Will prove a matchless monarch, then
The world will be convulsed, his name
Pass to abeyance with his fame.
Foes will spring up in every place
Led by a man of evil race,
An Áhri man, the monarch’s host
Will be dispersed, his throne be lost.¹
Him will that villain blind, and they
Will, after, take his life away.²”

On seeing that script, and in his father’s hand,
Hurmuzd was frayed and rent the silk asunder.
With bloodshot eyes and livid face he cried :—
“Injurious man ! what was thine aim herein ?
Wouldst have my head ?”

Bahrám Ázarmihán

Said : “Turkman-born ! how long wilt thou delight
In bloodshed ? From the Khán, not Kai Kubád,
Art thou upon whose head the crown was set
By Núshírwán.”

Hurmuzd knew : “If he can
He will o’erthrow me,” heard out his abuse,
And sent him back to prison where next night,

¹ More literally :—

“The enemy will cast him down from the throne.”

² Reading with P.

What time the moon rose o'er the mountain-tops,
 The deathsman slew him. At the court no sage
 Or counsellor or archimage was left.
 From ill self-governance all evils spring ;
 See that thou disregard that evil thing.

§ 4

How Hurmuzd turned from Tyranny to Justice

C. 1800

From that time forth he led a goodlier life,
 Moved by remorse at heart. Now every year,
 When nights were short, he sojourned at Istakhr
 Two months because that city was delightsome,
 The air serene : he knew not how to quit it.
 He and his court were wont to spend three months
 At Ispahán with its delicious air—
 The seat of mighty men. In Winter-time
 He dwelt at Taisafún among the troops,
 The archimages and the counsellors ;
 While in the Spring he was upon the plain
 Of the Arwand, and thus a while went by.
 His heart was terror-stricken by that scroll,
 He spent three watches of the night in prayer,
 Shed no more blood thenceforth and did no wrong :
 His soul mused not of ill. Whene'er the Veil
 Of lapis-lazuli was hidden, and when
 The topaz height appeared, a herald used
 Thus to proclaim : “ Famed men of Grace and pru-
 dence !
 If tilth be trampled and the sower troubled
 By that mishap, or if a horse shall enter
 Crops, or if any one withal shall trespass
 On orchards, then the horse's tail and ears
 Must be cut off and the thief's head be set

Upon the stake.”¹

He had a son beloved,
Just like the moon, whom he had named Parwíz,
And sometimes called “ Khusrau the well-content.”²
He never left his father’s side for long ;
The father never bloomed without the son.
It chanced that the young steed of prince Parwíz
Escaped from stall and followed by its groom
Went to the growing crops whose owner came
Lamenting to the groom and asked : “ What man
Must sorrow for this horse’s ears and tail ? ”

The groom said : “ ‘Tis the horse of prince
Parwíz ;
What careth he for subjects ? ”

Then the owner
Went to the king and laid the case before him,
Who said : “ Haste, dock the horse’s tail and ears,
Then have the damage to the crop assessed,
And prince Khusrau shall recompense the man
A hundredfold in money from his treasures
Upon the field and in its owner’s presence.”

Thereat the prince moved chiefs to plead for him
Before the Sháh that he would not have docked
The black steed’s tail and ears, but in his wrath
Against the steed the king paid no regard
To all those men of world-experience ;
The groom through terror of the king made haste
To dock the young steed of its ears and tail
Upon that tilth betampled ; and Khusrau
Paid the complainant what the Sháh had bidden.

Anon the king went hunting, and they all
Had much good sport. A valiant warrior,
Whose father was the captain of the host,
Saw, as he went along, a vine well laden

C. 1801

¹ Two couplets omitted.

² The prince afterwards famous as Sháh Khusrau Parwiz.

With unripe grapes and bade his servant haste
 To cut and take some bunches to his cook.
 The owner came and said : “ Thou miscreant !
 Thou neither wast the tender of this vine,
 Nor boughtest it with treasure and dínárs !
 Why hast thou spoiled the labour of another ?
 I shall complain of thee before the Sháh.”

The valiant horseman, fearing what might chance,
 Undid his belt forthwith and then bestowed it,
 All costly and all golden with each link
 Inlaid with gems, upon the man who said
 On seeing it : “ What wrong one must condone !
 Tell not the king. Thou hast no purchaser
 In me, so make it no affair of price ;
 While as for thanks I lay on thee that word ;
 Thou wouldst be lifeless if that just judge heard ! ”¹

§ 5

*How Hosts gathered from all Sides against Hurmuzd,
 and how he took Counsel with his Wazirs*

When he had reigned for ten years righteously
 The voice of foemen rose from every realm,
 King Sáwa marched upon him from Harát
 With drums and treasure, elephants and troops.
 If thou wouldst take the number of that host
 Go count four hundred o'er a thousand times.
 There were twelve hundred elephants of war ;
 Thou wouldst have said : “ Earth hath no room
 for them.”

The desert from Harát to the Marvrúd²
 Was thick as warp and woof with soldiery,

¹ Six couplets omitted.

² Reading with P.

And as he led them on to Marv the earth
Was hidden by the dust-clouds of the host.

King Sáwa wrote a letter to Hurmuzd,
And said : “ Convoke thy powers from every side,
Repair the roads and bridges for my troops,
Get provand and bethink thee of my sword.
I would pass through thy realm. Mine army reacheth
O'er river, height, and waste.”

C. 1802

On reading this

The king turned pale at all that countless host.
Then from another quarter Cæsar came,
And over-ran the land with his array—
A force of Rúmans five score thousand strong,
Courageous and redoubted cavaliers.
The cities ta'en by Núshírwán, whose name
Still frightened him, he took back with the sword :
All were again obedient unto Cæsar.¹
A host came from the side of the Khazars,
And all the fields and fells were black with them.
A warrior of experience and possessed
Of troops and treasure of his own was leader,
And from Armenia their companies
Extended to the gate of Ardabíl.
Then from the waste of spear-armed cavaliers
An army came past count. 'Abbás and 'Amr,
Two horsemen youthful and illustrious,
Led them. They gave to havoc land and crop
Because Hurmuzd demanded tribute of them.
That host reached the Farát, and in that land
No place for grass was left. When fortune loured
News reached Hurmuzd, and that successful Sháh
Grew all amort at his informants' words,
And he repented slaying those archmages,
And alienating wise men from his court.
He saw no counsellor, and he had need

¹ Couplet inserted from P. and one omitted.

Of wise advisers, so he sent and summoned
 The Iránians to full session in the palace,
 And made discovery of all the matter,
 Addressing thus those nobles of the land :—
 “ A greater host than any can recall
 Is marching on Irán.”

Then all the marchlords
 Approached him with suggestions, saying thus :—
 “ Advised and prudent Sháh ! hear us herein.
 Thou art a wise Sháh ; we are subjects merely,
 And count ourselves as less than one archmage.
 Thy scribes and thine archmages hast thou slain,
 Departing from both faith and precedent.
 Think what to do and who shall guard our land.”

Then said an archimage who was wazír :—
 “ O sage and knowledge-seeking Sháh ! if now
 C. 1803 The host of the Khazars come forth to battle
 Our warriors will be fully occupied.¹
 Let us make overtures to them of Rúm,
 And then pluck up the Arabs by the root.
 King Sáwa is more instant and with him
 Our prospect is more gloomy too. Our trouble
 Will come by way of Khurásán for he
 Will waste our country and our wealth withal ;
 So when the Turkman marcheth from Jíhún
 To war there must be no delay.”

Hurmuzd,

For he was seeking for a policy,
 Said to that archimage : “ How shall we now
 Bear us toward king Sáwa ? ”

He replied :—
 “ Put thine own soldiers into war-array,
 For troops exalt a monarch. Summon too
 The muster-master that he may account
 The number fit for service.”

¹ “ tes vaillantes troupes n'hésiteront pas un instant.” Mohl.

With the roll
 The muster-master came before the Sháh,
 Whose army numbered five score thousand men,
 The more part mounted, many were on foot.

The archmage said : “ With such a host as this
 We well may be defeated by king Sáwa
 Unless thou actest boldly and uprightly,
 Dismissing all ideas of fraud and falsehood ;
 Then thou wilt free thy subjects’ heads from bonds
 As well becometh kingship. Thou hast heard
 The mighty tale of ill done to Gushtásp,
 And to Luhrásp all for religion’s sake
 By great Arjásp, that brave old Wolf, and all
 The cavaliers of Chín, the woe of Balkh,
 And how life was embittered in that land
 Until Asfandiyár was set at large,
 And pressed the war amain.¹ Unless the king
 Of earth will be advised he will behold
 Much trouble from the Turks of Chín, but though
 I pass the king in years I pass him not
 In thought.”

The king said : “ Cæsar shall not fight
 With us. I will restore the cities taken
 By Núshírwán, and then he will withdraw.”

He chose a scribe—a warrior—as envoy,
 A wise, a prudent, and observant man,
 And sent him unto Cæsar with this message :—
 “ I want no Rúman cities ; be that land
 Thine ; but withal set foot not on our coasts
 If thou wouldest be both great and prosperous.”

The envoy came to Cæsar and delivered
 The message of Hurmuzd. The lord of Rúm
 Withdrew and did no scath upon Írán.
 The king, when Cæsar had withdrawn, prepared
 To war with the Khazars. He formed a host,

¹ See Vol. v. p. 35 *seq.*

C. 1804

Whose dust-clouds blotted day, and sent it thither
 To fire those fields and fells, led by Kharrád—
 A man of Grace, of worship, and of justice.
 Now when that army reached Armenia
 The host of the Khazars barred all the way.
 The Írániāns slaughtered many and bare off
 Much spoil. The Arabs hearing this were checked,
 And went back whence they came. So when the
 Sháh
 Heard that Kharrád had been victorious
 Naught but to fight king Sáwa still remained,
 To which endeavour all his thoughts were strained.

§ 6

*How Hurmuzd heard of Bahrám Chúbina and sent
 for him*

A servant of the Sháh's, one hight Nastúh,
 A wise, successful, and observant man,
 Spake thus : “ O Sháh ! be happy. May the hand
 Of ill be ever far from thee ! My sire,
 The wise Mihrán Sitád, hath still his wits,
 Though old, and sitteth with the Zandavasta
 In his retirement, having naught to hope for
 Through age and weakness. Now but recently
 I went and spent a day and night with him,
 Told him about king Sáwa, his vast host,
 And elephants of war. My father said :—
 ‘ The ancient prophecy is then fulfilled ! ’
 I questioned him : ‘ To what referrest thou ? ’
 He answered : ‘ If the Sháh shall ask of me
 I will reveal it.’ ”

Then the king of kings

Commanded that a noble should set forth
 In haste and fetch the old man from his palace
 Upon a litter. When that ancient came,
 His heart all knowledge and his head all lore,
 Before the Sháh, Hurmuzd inquired of him :—
 “ What know’st thou of the past ? ”

“ O fluent Sháh,
 And heedful,” said the elder, “ when the Khán
 Dispatched thy mother to Irán from Chín
 I was the chief of eight score warriors
 That went to ask of him her hand in marriage.
 Thy father, that most upright king of kings,
 Demanded no slave’s daughter of the Khán,
 But said : ‘ Require a daughter of the queen ;
 No slave must be the consort of the Sháh.’
 I went before the Khán and did obeisance.
 He had five daughters in his women’s bower,
 All goodly, fit to deck the thrones of monarchs,
 In gait like pheasants and in looks like Spring,
 And all fulfilled with colour, scent, and beauty.
 The monarch sent me to their bower. I entered
 That famed court. They had decked the daughters’
 faces,

And twined their locks with roses, save thy mother
 Who wore no coronet, no necklace, bracelet,
 Or other ornament but sat there mute
 With hanging head and shyly hid her face
 Behind her sleeves ; but she alone of all
 Was daughter of the queen ; none of the rest
 Possessed such elegance, such bloom, and charm
 Because the queen was daughter of Faghfúr,
 And naturally indisposed to ill.
 She sorrowed that her child should dwell afar,
 And that pure daughter quit the monarch’s palace.
 Among those daughters her it was I chose ;
 I heeded not the others. Said the Khán :—

C. 1805

‘Select another ; all the five are fair
 And worshipful,’ and this was my response :—
 ‘My choice is made ; to choose again were fatal.’
 Then summoned he his priests and made them kneel
 Before the royal throne and asked concerning
 His daughter’s future. Those astrologers
 Replied : ‘Thou shalt see naught but good and
 hear
 Naught but the truth. From her and from the
 Sháh
 A prince like some fierce lion will be born,
 Of lofty stature and with lusty limbs,
 Brave as a lion, bounteous as a cloud,
 Black-eyed, impetuous, and choleric,
 Who, on his father’s death, will be the king.
 He will enjoy much treasure from his sire,
 And in his latter days refrain from evil.
 Thereafter will a mighty king arise,
 Lead forth a valiant host of Turks and seek
 With that array to occupy Írán
 And country of Yaman throughout. The Sháh
 Will be in dudgeon at him and will fear
 His high, victorious fortune, but will have
 Far off a subject, an exalted horseman
 And loyal liege, tall and adust of body,
 Upon his head crisp locks as black as musk,
 Big both of bone and nose and swart of skin—
 A warrior brave and strong, nicknamed Chúbína,¹
 And sprung from paladins. This strenuous man
 Will come with some few soldiers to the Sháh,
 Soon overthrow this Turk and wreck his host.’
 Ne’er saw I one more glad than was the Khán
 On hearing this. He gave the Crown of all
 His daughters unto Núshírwán while I
 Received her on the Sháh’s behalf. This done

¹ i.e., Stick-like.

I hied me home, the Khán producing for us
 Such wealth of jewels from his treasury
 That we were put to it to carry them.
 He came with me as far as the Jíhún,
 Embarked his daughter and with doleful heart
 Turned back, at one with sorrow for his child.
 Now have I told my tale here in thy presence,
 O king of men ! Seek for the man himself
 Within thy realm and bid thy couriers haste
 Because thy triumph lieth in his hands,
 But tell not friend or foe."

E'en with the words
 He yielded up the ghost, and all the folk
 Bewailed him bitterly. The king of kings
 Was all astound and poured down tears of blbod.
 " Míhrán Sitád," he told the Iránians,
 " Retained this story in his memory,
 And after having told it to us died,
 Committing his accepted soul to God,
 And God be thanked that this old man hath uttered
 Words of such import. Had I fetched him hither
 But one hour later he had died and I
 Had seen much grief. Our realm must now be
 searched
 For this man whether he be lord or liege.
 Seek indefatigably for this one
 Until ye find him."

An illustrious subject,
 The master of the horse, named Zád Farrukh,
 Who sought in all the pleasure of the Sháh,
 Went to him and thus spake : " The indications
 Detailed by that famed man before the lords
 Can only, otherwise we clutch but wind,
 Apply, methinketh, to Bahrám Chúbína,
 Son of Gashasp, a noble, well skilled horseman
 To whom thou gavest Ardabíl and Barda'

Where he became marchlord with drums and troops.”

The Sháh dispatched a speedy cameleer
 To bid Bahrám Chúbína dally not
 Upon the way but come from Ardabíl
 To court alone without the drums and host.¹
 The messenger the joyful news conveyed,
 And told him what Mihrán Sitád had said.

§ 7

*How Bahrám Chúbína came to Hurmuzd and was
 made Captain of the Host*

C. 1807 Not calling any of his warriors
 That world-aspirant hurried off from Barda’,
 And when he came the Sháh accorded audience.
 On seeing the visage of the king of kings
 The veteran much praised that noble one,
 Who at first sight grew favourably disposed,
 Perceived the marks named by Mihrán Sitád
 In him, smiled and grew blithe of countenance,
 Received him well and lodged him splendidly.
 When sombre night flung off its musky veil,
 And Sol displayed its face, the marchlord came
 To court, and all the chiefs made way for him.
 The world-lord summoned him and made him sit
 Among the magnates, told him how Írán
 Was placed and what Mihrán Sitád had said,
 Then asked about king Sáwa, saying: “ Shall I
 Make peace or send forth troops? ”

The warrior

Replied: “ We may not make a peace with him,
 For, since he fain would fight, to sue for peace

¹ Reading with P.

Will mean defeat for us ; the foe moreover
 Will be emboldened if he see thee weak.
 To proffer feast in war-time is to make
 Contention like submission.”

Said Hurmuzd :—

“ What is the course then ? Shall I seek delay,
 Or march to battle ? ”

He made answer thus :—

“ It augureth well if¹ foes behave unjustly.
 What said the noble counsellor ? ‘ No match
 For justice is injustice.’ Therefore seek
 To fight with this injurious enemy,
 For fire and water will not flow together ;²
 But if thou actest otherwise herein
 The ancient sky will choose another Sháh.
 If we put forth the might of our own arms,
 And what we have of prowess, holy God
 Will neither blame us nor shall we be shamed
 Before the heroes when the truth is sought.
 Shall we be weak enough to shun the combat
 While yet ten thousand of Iránians
 Remain unslain ? What will malignants say
 To thee if thou flee foes without a fight ?
 When I pour arrows down on them and make
 My bow as ’twere a cloud in Spring, and when
 A hundred thousand swords and iron maces
 Are brandished in the ranks of war, and yet
 We gain no glimpse of triumph but despair
 Of fortune in our hearts, then we will be
 Our foemen’s to command for we shall have
 No body, life or spirit, left to us ;
 But let us struggle till we see if heaven
 Will bring us gain or loss.”

C. 1808

On hearing this
 The Sháh smiled and the court grew bright, and then

¹ Reading with P.

² *Id.*

The veterans left the presence with full hearts,
And talking with Bahrám Chúbína said :—
“ Henceforth if he shall speak with thee be modest,
Because king Sáwa hath such mighty powers
That e'en to ants and gnats they bar the way !
Who after what thou said'st before the Sháh
Will venture to be captain of the host ? ”

He answered them : “ Illustrious warriors !
I will be captain by our great Sháh's leave.”
Informants on the watch went to the world's
king,
And told him of this speech and ten times more.
The king of kings rejoiced thereat and ceased
To fear those troops. He gave Bahrám Chúbína
The chief command, exalting to the clouds
His valiant head. All warriors that sought
For glory hailed him captain of the host.
He came before the king with girded loins,
Equipped for war, and said : “ By thy permission
I will call o'er the roll and ascertain
Who are the fighting-men and who are slack
In quest of fame.”

The Sháh said : “ Thou art leader
Responsible for good and ill alike.”

The chief went to the royal muster-ground,
And bade the troops parade. He made his choice
Of those that were the crown among the chiefs,
And entered on the roll twelve thousand names
Of mail-clad warriors on barded steeds.
All those enrolled were forty years of age ;
The older and the younger were rejected.
Bahrám Chúbína held the chief command
As one renowned in war. He made one hight
Yalán-sína—a man of vengeful breast—¹
Chief of the warrior-chiefs to go before

¹ Sína.

C. 1809

The ranks on battle-days, to wheel his steed,
 Proclaim his ancestry, and set on strife
 The warriors' thoughts. One named Ízid Gashasp,¹
 Who drew not rein at fire, he bade to guard
 The baggage-train and dress the wings. He made
 Kandá Gashasp, who as he rode would grasp
 The tails of lions, leader of the rear.

Then to the troops thus spake the paladin :—
 “ Ye ardent chiefs ! if ye would have God's help
 In lightening your dark task inflict not harm
 Or loss and never gird your loins for ill,
 And when at night the clarion-call ariseth
 Leap up and one and all so spur your steeds
 That in the dark more tumult may arise.

Through strength derived from resting horse and
 man

Will take no thought about the day of battle.”

When tidings reached the king of how the wise
 Bahrám Chúbína acted he rejoiced
 Both at the words and deeds ; he oped his treasures,
 And paid the troops. He gave Bahrám withal²
 Arms from the magazines which he unlocked,
 Assembled in the city all the herds
 Of battle-steeds that were at large, and ordered
 The captain of the host to ask of him
 Whate'er was needful, saying : “ Thou hast seen
 All sorts of warfare and hast heard what stores
 King Sáwa, that illustrious man, possesseth
 Of treasure, arms, and troops, and how his Turks
 Set earth a-quaking on the day of battle.
 Now thou hast chosen out of all the host
 Twelve thousand men in mail on barded steeds !
 I know not how such numbers can avail
 Upon the day of fight, and thou hast chosen,
 Instead of youthful sworders, men of forty ! ”

¹ Reading with P.

² *Id.*

The chief replied : “ Well-starred and courteous
Sháh !

The saying of the mighty thou hast heard,
Who ruled the world as Sháhs in days of old :—
‘ When conquering fortune is assisting thee
‘ Tis well though little other aid there be,’
And by this token I will prove it too
If now the Sháh, whose word is law, will hear :
When Kai Káús was in Hámávarán,
In bonds with countless others, Rustam chose
Twelve thousand fit and warlike cavaliers,
And freed him, and no harm befell the chiefs.

C. 1810 Again, Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, the head
Of noble and illustrious men, employed
Twelve thousand men in mail on barded steeds
To execute revenge for Siyáwush.

Again, the glorious Asfandiyár
Was leader of twelve thousand warriors
Against Arjásp and by a stratagem
Made dust fly out of host and hold alike.¹
When any host exceedeth this amount
It is too large for dash and enterprise ;
The leader that conducteth countless troops
To battle is discomfited in fight.

As for thy saying : ‘ Men of forty years
Are not so eager for the fight as youths,’
The man of forty hath experience,
And excellence in point of hardihood,
Remembering the seal of bread and salt
O’er which the heaven hath so oft revolved.
In dread too of the voice of calumny,
And loss of fame, he shirketh not the fight.
Moreover wife and child and family

¹ In the accounts given in the poem of these instances the limitation to twelve thousand is recorded only in the case of Asfandiyár. Later on Gurdya, Bahrám Chúbína’s sister, repeats the statement about Rustam. See p. 168.

Irk not the feelings of a veteran.
 A young man is deceived by outward show,
 And when he should have patience he is rash.
 He hath not wife or child or tilth ; to him
 The worthy and the worthless seem alike.
 Since wisdom resteth on experience
 He seeth not the import of affairs.
 If he is conqueror in any fight
 He laugheth with delight and wasteth time ;
 But if one chanceth to prevail against him
 His foes see nothing but his back."

On hearing,
 The king grew fresh as roses in the Spring,
 Then said : " Depart, put on thy mail, and go
 Forth from the palace to the riding-ground."

The general left the king, called for his girdle,
 Mail-coat, and Rúman helm, had his steed barded,
 And set the coiled up lasso in its straps.
 The world-lord with his arrows, clubs, and balls
 Went out upon the ground with his wazírs.
 The general approached with mace and mail
 And Rúman casque. The world-lord, seeing, blessed
 him.

He kissed the ground and showed a liege's prowess
 With mace, at polo, and in archery.

The king then had the banner brought that bare
 A violet dragon for device, the banner

That had been borne in fight in front of Rustam,¹
 Grasped it immediately and, handling it

With smiles, bestowed it on Bahrám Chúbína,
 Invoking many a blessing on him, saying :—

" My predecessors used to hail as chief
 Of all our race the man whose name was Rustam,
 The paladin, the conqueror of the world,
 Triumphant and of ardent soul. Thou holdest

C. 1811

¹ Cf. Vol. ii. p. 154.

His flag. Mayst thou be conquering and loyal !
 Thou art a second Rustam to my thoughts
 In courage, prowess, and obedience.”

The paladin saluted him and said :—
 “ Be always conquering and bright of mind.”

With peerless Rustam’s banner in his hand
 The general left the plain for his abode,
 And on their several ways the Sháh’s troops went.
 The captain of the host was well content.

§ 8

*How Bahrám Chúbína went with twelve thousand
 Cavaliers to fight King Sáwa*

When morning dawned upon the mountain-tops,
 And when the glittering Shield of Gold appeared,
 The chief came to the palace of the Sháh,
 And prostrate in the presence of the troops
 Spake thus : “ I was a man that had no claims,
 But by thy Grace became the age’s crown.
 I have to beg one favour of the king—
 That he will send with me a trusty man
 To make a note of those that fight and lay
 A hostile head beneath the dust and thus
 Achieve their end.”

Hurmuzd replied : “ Mihrán,
 The old, is great,¹ observant, eloquent,”
 Bade him accompany the chief and quit
 The palace for the combat. From the province
 Of Taisafún the army marched, their leader
 Bahrám Chúbína. ’Twas a prudent, brave,
 And dauntless host, and wary as a lion

¹ Reading with P.

Was their commander. When he had departed
 The monarch of the world himself withdrew,
 Was privy with his archimage¹ and said :—
 “ Upon the day of fight this man will laugh
 For joy ! What will result ? Let us confer.”

The archmage answered : “ Mayst thou live for
 ever,
 For thou deservest everlasting life.
 This paladin possessed of such a mien
 And stature, ready speech and ardent soul,
 Must needs be happy and victorious,
 And cause a barren world to bring forth fruit ;
 But yet I fear me that he will revolt
 At last against his sovereign and patron
 Because he talked with such audacity,
 And spake so like a lion to the Sháh.”

Hurmuzd made answer to him : “ Mingle not
 Bane with the antidote, misdoubting one !
 If he shall prove victorious o'er king Sáwa
 I ought to yield to him the crown and throne.
 May he be ever as now for he will make
 A glorious sovereign ! ”

C. 1812

The archimage,
 On hearing what the Sháh said, paled and bit
 His lips. The king himself moreover kept
 The thing in mind, and in a while selected
 A courtier as his confidant to learn
 How matters stood, and said : “ Pursue in haste
 The paladin and tell what thou observest.”

The agent followed swiftly, known to none.
 He was a guide, in omens skilled, and used
 To utter his prognostics to the Sháh.
 Bahrám Chúbína, quitting Taisafún,
 Led on the host himself. In front appeared,
 And far from him, one that purveyed sheep's heads,

¹ Ayín Gashasp.

Which rose above a clean draped wicker tray.
 The chieftain urged his horse and, strange to tell !
 Pierced one head with his spear, rode off with it
 Aloft, then flung it where he would and drew
 An omen from the matter, saying thus :—
 “ Just so will I cut off king Sáwa’s head,
 Will throw it in his army’s line of march,
 And shatter all his host.”

The emissary,
 Sent by the Sháh, drew too his presage, saying :—
 “ This favourite of fortune will attain,
 His labours done, the crown at last for when
 His end is gained he will grow troublesome,
 And will rebel.”

He went and told the king,
 Who wedded grief and anguish for the words
 Were worse than death to him. He withered up,
 That verdant leaf grew sere. He called to him
 A young man of the court and sent him off
 In all haste to the paladin and said :—
 “ Depart and tell the captain of the host :—
 ‘ For this night tarry where thou art. At dawn
 Turn back and come to me for I would clear
 The court of strangers and advise thee further,
 For thoughts of profit have occurred to me.’ ”

The messenger came to the paladin,
 And told what he had heard. Bahrám Chúbína
 Made this reply : “ Men do not, O wise Sháh !
 Recall an army on the march ; such action
 Would be ill-omened and would reinforce
 The foe. I will return when I have conquered,
 And then thy kingdom and thy diadem
 Shall shine.”

The messenger returned and gave
 The warrior’s answer to the Sháh and he
 Was satisfied. That envoy’s toil was vain.

At dawn the captain of the host led on
The troops and called God's blessing down on
them.

He marched to Khúzistán :¹ the troops harmed
none.

There came a woman with a sack of hay
Among them and a horseman purchased it,
Refused to pay her, and made off. She came
Lamenting to Bahrám Chúbína, saying :—

“ I have some hay concealed. I brought a sack's
worth,

And passed before thy troops. A cavalier,
With iron helm, hath taken it from me
While on the march ! ”

Forthwith they sought the man,
And haled him quickly to the general.

The brave Bahrám Chúbína said to him :—

“ So thou didst think this fault a little one ! ”

They smashed his head and hands and feet. The
chief

Had him dragged forth before the camp-enclosure,
Then clave him through the middle with the sword,
And filled the heart of the unjust with terror.

Then from the camp-enclosure 'twas proclaimed :—
“ O ye illustrious men and of good will ! ”

The stealer of a stalk of hay shall find
No intercessor. I will cleave his waist
Asunder with the sword. Let all procure
By payment what they need.”

Bahrám Chúbína

Led on his host well ordered and they marched
Toward Dámaghán.

The Sháh was full of care

¹ This seems to imply that he started from Párs. Later on he says (p. 112) that he started from Baghdád, *i.e.*, from the neighbourhood of Taisafún (Ctesiphon) where the troops were stationed (p. 90). Baghdád itself was not then in existence.

At Sáwa's army, elephants, and treasures,¹
 And spake thus to Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 One night at rise of moon : “ Prepare to go
 To our opponent and be diligent,
 Not slumbering but speeding. Mark his troops
 As to their numbers and their quality,
 And who their leader and their warriors are.”

He ordered that a letter of advice
 Should be indited to the hostile king,
 And countless royal presents sent therewith.
 He said thus to the messenger : “ Proceed
 Toward Harát and if a host appear
 Know it for that of brave Bahrám Chúbína,
 C. 1814 And not another. Then approach and tell him
 What thou hast heard from me, thus saying : ‘ I
 By good news and by blandishment will spread
 A fresh snare for the foe. Thy secret purpose
 Must be kept hidden. If he hear thy name
 And fame . . . ! I will induce him to thy net,
 Employing fair and lengthy parleyings.’ ”

Kharrád, son of Barzín, prepared to start,
 Came as the Sháh had bidden and delivered
 The message when he saw Bahrám Chúbína.
 He went thence to king Sáwa, to the place
 Where were the elephants and troops and treasure,
 And, having audience, did him reverence,
 Delivering the message privily,
 And adding to it every argument
 To draw the army to Harát. When Sáwa
 Arrived and camped upon the river-bank
 The outposts went forth, marked Bahrám Chúbína
 With all his troops and, seeing that stout host,
 Returned in all haste to king Sáwa, saying :—
 “ A force hath reached the desert of Harát,
 Commanded by a famous chief.”

¹ Two couplets omitted.

King Sáwa,
 Concerned what course to take, called from the tent
 The envoy of the Sháh and rated him :—
 “ Didst not foresee, thou crafty Áhriman !
 A fall from thy high station ? From the court
 Of that vile Sháh thou camest to ensnare me,
 And leadest forth to war a Persian host,
 Encamping on the meadows of Harát ! ”

Kharrád, son of Barzín, replied : “ The force
 Confronting thine is small. Take not its coming
 In ill part ; 'tis some marchlord passing by,
 Or some chief seeking shelter with the Sháh,
 Or merchants who have brought an escort with
 them
 To guard them on their way. Who would confront
 thee,
 Though mountains turn to seas, to seek revenge ?
 I will send one to find out who or what
 This traveller is.”¹

His words rejoiced king Sáwa,
 Who said : “ In truth that is the course to take.
 We will dispatch to learn if friend or foe
 They be.”

Now as Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 Withdrew to his own tent the night o'ertopped
 The mountains, and he gat in readiness
 To flee the wrath to come. At dead of night
 The monarch bade Faghfúr go with an escort
 Forth from his father to the paladin.
 That understanding youth went forth and reaching
 The Íráanian host dispatched a cavalier
 To ask : “ Who are these warriors and wherefore
 March they ? ”

The horseman went like dust and cried :—
 “ Who are your chiefs and leader, noble sirs !

C. 1815

¹ This couplet inserted from P.

And champion in the combat, for Faghfúr,
 Who is king Sáwa's heart and eyes, would see him
 Without attendance ? ”

Came a warrior

Forth from the troops and told Bahrám Chúbína
 What he had heard. The captain of the host
 Went from the tent-enclosure and his flag
 Was reared resplendent over him. Faghfúr
 Of Chín, perceiving, hasted and made sweat
 His prancing steed, and questioned : “ Whence art
 thou ? ”

Why haltest here ? I hear that thou hast fled
 From Párs as one who being wronged shed blood.”

Bahrám Chúbína answered : “ God forbid
 That I should purpose vengeance on the Sháh.
 I came forth from Baghdád with this array
 To fight by his command, for when the news
 About king Sáwa and his host reached court
 He said to me : ‘ Go forth and hold the road
 With arrows, maces, spears, and scimitars.’ ”

On hearing this Faghfúr sped back to tell
 His sire how matters stood. Being thus apprised,
 And grown suspicious, Sáwa sought forthwith
 The envoy of the Sháh but some one said :—
 “ Kharrád, son of Barzín, hath fled with tears
 Of blood at having come.”

“ How could that foe,”
 Said Sáwa to his son, “ get clear away
 At night from such a countless host as this,
 And wherefore have the guards been so remiss ? ”

§ 9

*How King Sáwa sent a Message to Bahrám Chúbína
and his Answer*

He sent thereafter to Bahrám Chúbína
A fluent elder, saying : “ Go and tell
This Persian : ‘ Mar not out of foolishness
Thy reputation here, for surely thou
Must know this much—that that great king of thine
Would have thy life and therefore sendeth thee
To fight with one nigh peerless in the world.
He said to thee : “ Go forth and seize their road,”

C. 1816

And thou unwillingly didst hear the words,
For with my troops and elephants I trample
A mountain if it cometh in my path.’ ”

Bahrám Chúbína, hearing what he said,
Smiled at that hasty trafficking and answered :—
“ If my death be the world-lord’s hidden purpose
My duty is to do what pleaseth him
Though earth shall take the measure of my height.”

The messenger, returning to king Sáwa,
Reported what he heard the warrior say,
And Sáwa said : “ Go, tell the Persian thus :—
‘ Why talk so much ? Why art thou in the field ?
Ask what thou wilt of me.’ ”

The messenger
Went to Bahrám Chúbína and thus spake :—
“ Reveal thy purposes because my king
Is favoured by the stars and he would have
Thee do his will.”

Bahrám Chúbína said :—
“ Say : ‘ If thou wouldest do right act openly.
If friendship with the monarch of the world
Be secretly thy wish I will receive thee

On this march as a guest and pledge myself
 To grant thee thy desires. I will bestow
 On thy troops gold and silver, crowns and girdles
 Upon those worthy of them. I will send
 The Sháh a cavalier that he may come
 Half way to meet thee and, as equals do,
 Provide thee provand. If thou art a friend
 He will make much of thee, but if thou hast
 Come hither for contention, to the deep,
 And to the crocodile's maw, then thou shalt quit
 The desert of Harát in such a plight
 That all chiefs shall bewail thee. May a ditch
 Be at thy door on thy return, may blast
 Pursue and rain companion thee, for naught
 But ill luck brought thee hither, being fain
 That ill befall thy head.' ”

The messenger

Turned back, came like the wind, and gave the
 answer
 Of that aspirant. Hearing it king Sáwa
 Was wroth with that stone-hearted opposite ;
 His heart was straitened at that chill response,
 And thinking of it filled his cheeks with shame.
 He said : “ Go, take yon human dív this message :—
 ‘ Thou hast no fame in war ; I would not slay thee.
 Such as thy Sháh are servants at my court,
 And set by thee my meanest slaves are chiefs.
 If thou shalt ask for quarter at my hands
 I will exalt thy head above the throng,
 Thou shalt have many gifts from me, and all
 Thy troops shall be enriched ; but one aspiring
 To valour looketh not to futile words
 And deeds of madness.’ ”

C. 1817

That proud monarch's envoy
 Came to Bahrám Chúbína and delivered
 Those biting words which yet were what he wished.

On hearing he informed the man : “ Thy lord
 Must hear my answer : ‘ If I am so mean
 That meanness covereth my head with shame,
 The king of kings for his part was ashamed
 To come out in his wrath to fight with thee.
 ’Tis through my meanness that I have marched
 forth
 With troops to wreck the kindred of king Sáwa.
 I will cut off his head and carry it
 Before the Sháh ; it is not worth my while
 To stick it on my spear upon the road.
 For me to grant thee quarter would demean thee,
 But I will fall upon thee in my meanness.
 Thou shalt not see me save upon the day
 Of fight and followed by my dark-blue flag,
 Because if thou upon that dragon glance
 ’Tis death ; thy head and helm shall sheath my
 lance.’ ”

§ 10

*How King Sáwa and Bahrám Chúbína set the Battle
 in Array against each other*

King Sáwa’s envoy, when he heard those words
 Of stern defiance, showed his back. He went,
 And told what he had heard and seen whereat
 The Turks’ king’s head breathed vengeance and he
 bade
 To bring the tymbals forth and to lead out
 The elephants high-crested to the plain.
 The realm was darkened with the dust of hoofs,
 The trumpets blared. Now when Bahrám Chúbína
 Heard that a host had come, and plains and vales
 Were yellow, red, and black, he bade his men

Mount and rode forth in armour, mace in hand.
 Behind him lay Harát, before a host
 Of swordsmen. He drew up the wings. The troops
 Were as one heart and body. Thou hadst said :—
 “ The world is all cuirass ; a star is shining
 On every spear.”

King Sáwa viewed that field,
 Its order and array, perceived that while
 Bahrám Chúbína rested on Harát
 His own position was both cramped and ill,
 And thus addressed his horsemen, veterans,
 And intimates : “ A lying messenger
 Came from the Persian leader of the folk,
 And tarried till yon host had seized the city,
 And left me nothing but a brake of thorns ! ”

C. 1818

He ranked his army in that straitened place,
 The air was indigo and earth was hidden.
 Upon the right were two score thousand horsemen,
 Who used two-headed darts and wielded spears,
 With two score thousand on the left withal,
 All archers and engrossers of the fray,
 While two score thousand warriors formed the centre,
 Who carried spear or sword, and two score thousand
 He stationed in the rear ; but many troops
 Were left unused for he was cramped for room.
 They placed the elephants before the line,
 As 'twere a wall, and barred the way in front.
 Thus circumstanced king Sáwa's heart was grieved
 By reason of this straitening of his host.
 Thou wouldest have said : “ His fortune hath fore-
 shown
 To him the presage of an empty throne.”

§ 11

How King Sáwa sent another Message to Bahrám Chúbína and his Answer

Then from the champaign of Harát he sent
 Again a warrior of eloquence,
 A man all guileful, to Bahrám Chúbína
 To say : “ Thou hast not wedded heaven’s own for-
 tune :

Wilt thou not hear advice and such appeals ?
 Make friends with wisdom, open thine heart’s eyes.
 Thou hast found two whose equals in the world
 Have never yet been born of royal race ;
 They shine like suns in heaven and all the year
 Are clad in mail, they are so valorous.
 One is myself, the lawful king of earth ;
 The other is my high-born son Parmúda.
 My troops are more than leaves upon the trees,
 Had some the skill to number them. If I
 Should reckon up my men and elephants
 Thou wouldest smile at rain-drops from Spring-clouds.
 There are tents, tent-enclosures, implements
 Of war beyond conception ; shouldst thou count
 Withal my steeds and men, my wastes and moun-
 tains,
 Thou wouldest marvel. All the other kings,
 If worthy of such honour, are my lieges.
 If seas had life¹ and mountains feet to run
 They could not carry off my treasury,
 Arms, implements, and fruitage of my toils.
 The glorious Great, save for thy Persian lord,
 Throughout the world acclaim me as their king,
 And thy life also lieth in my hands
 As well I know. If I lead on my troops

C. 1819

¹ “ Si l’eau de la mer inondait la terre.” Mohl.

They will not let pass ant and gnat. Withal
 I have a thousand barded elephants
 Whose scent affrayeth horsemen. Who will come
 To face me from Írán and from Túrán,
 And by such coming aggravate my toils ?
 From this place to the gates of Taisafún
 My powers extend, will stay, be amplified.
 Some one hath duped thee, O mine enemy !
 Some one, perchance a madman, for thou lov'st not
 Thyself or else dissemblest since thine eye
 Discriminateth not 'twixt good and ill.
 How should such foolishness become the wise ?
 Cease this contention and present thyself
 Before me, and I will not keep thee waiting,
 But give to thee high office and my daughter
 With worship and a crown. Thou shalt receive
 A lordship at our hands and suffer not
 The ills that subjects bear, and when the Sháh
 Shall have been slain in fight, and when his crown
 And throne are mine, on thee will I bestow them
 With all his treasure, diadem, and goods.
 Thence will I march on Rúm and then the troops,
 The treasure and the land, will all be thine.
 Thus have I spoken for thou pleasest me,
 And wisely hast thou dealt with these affairs.
 Thou knowest the conduct and the art of war ;
 Thy sire and grandsire held command in chief,
 So what I say is not mere compliment
 But pity for thy sake who hast arrayed
 Thy puny force to fight with me to-day.
 Thou shalt receive no further messages
 If thou art retrograde to my desires."

The envoy spake, the chieftain heard and made
 A grim response : " O man of evil mark !
 Among the magnates and the eminent
 None reverenceth a monarch profitless

And wordy. From thy talk from first to last
 I have perceived thee confident in speech.
 The man whose day is ending seeketh prowess
 In words not deeds. I heard thy feckless parle,
 Yet my heart quaileth not for fear of harm.
 As for thy saying : ' I will slay the Sháh,
 And give thee realm and throne,' a chief once said:—
 ' If thou shalt drive a mendicant away
 From any town is he not sure to say :—
 " There I was lord ; the rest were 'neath my sway ? " ' C. 1820
 In our affair there will not intervene
 Two days of sunlight ere I shall dispatch
 By this same token to the Sháh thy head
 Upon a spear. Again, for what thou saidest
 About thy daughter, treasure, troops, and realm,
 I should have thanked thee once and should have
 called thee

A monarch of discernment thus to give,
 Without designs upon the Iránian throne,
 Thy daughter to me and with her dispatch
 A gorgeous throne and goods. Then thou hadst had
 Myself for friend within Irán, not fought
 Against its warriors ; but now my lance
 Is at thine ear and with my sword will I
 Behead thee, and when thou hast gone thy pate,
 Thy crown and treasure, are mine, and mine withal
 Thy daughter and the fruit of thy past toils.
 Thou saidest further : ' I have crowns and thrones
 With elephants and horsemen past compute.'
 A chief said, battling in the ranks of war :—
 ' The longer water is denied a hound
 The greater will his eagerness be found.'
 The dívs seduced thy heart so that thou camest
 To fight the Sháh and thou wilt writhe beneath
 God's chastisement and for thine evil deeds.
 Again, thou sayest : ' I have among my lieges

Great men possessed of crowns and coronets,
 And all the cities of the world are mine.'
 The age herein is witness to thy words.
 To cities roads are open, lord and liege
 May tramp the marches, but if thou shalt knock
 Upon a city-gate thy kingship there
 Will prove a brake of thorns. As for thine offer
 To pardon me—a craven in thine eyes—
 Thou wilt forgive me not when thou hast seen
 My spear and shalt not have me as a liege.
 As for thy troops, desires, and policy,
 Thy mighty elephants and throne, what time
 I rank mine army I account them naught,
 And care no jot for all thy warriors.
 Though thou art king thou utterest such lies
 That thou wilt gain no glory in the world.
 For what thou saidest : ' I approve of thee,
 And would select thee as my general,'
 What I approve, since reaching man's estate,
 Is the approval of the king of kings.
 I have allowed the king three days and when
 The Glory of the Lustre of the world
 Shall show, the army in Irán shall see
 Thy head upon a spear before the Sháh."

The messenger returned with cheeks like gall,
 And fruitful, youthful fortune waxen old.
 He told king Sáwa what the answer was,
 And at his words the monarch's visage loured.
 Said the Faghfúr : " What feebleness is this ?
 Yon little host should rather ask our tears."

Then to the entry of the camp-enclosure
 He went and bade bring forth the Indian bells,
 Gongs, mighty elephants, and kettledrums,
 And make heaven ebon-hued. While that famed
 youth
 Prepared to fight the haughty monarch mused ;

Then to his son : “ Thou chosen of the troops !
Refrain from fighting till to-morrow morn.”

The troops withdrew on both sides and the watch
Went from the tent-enclosures. In both hosts
They kindled fires, and rumour filled all coasts.

§ 12

*How Bahrám Chúbína had a Dream in the Night, how
he gave Battle the next Morning, and how King
Sáwa was slain*

Now when Bahrám Chúbína was alone
Within his tent he sent and¹ called the Íránians,
And with his troops took counsel for the fight
Till dark, till Turk and Persian both reposed,
And he that would might have the world for naught;
But brave Bahrám Chúbína still mused war,
While sleeping in his tent. That Lion dreamed
That in the fight the Turks proved valorous,
While his own troops were routed and himself,
Debarred more strife, unsuccoured and afoot,
Asked quarter of the heroes of the foe.
He woke in grief, his noble head sore troubled,
With pain and sorrow passed the hours of dark,
Arrayed himself but told to none his dream.
Just then arrived Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Who had escaped king Sáwa, and spake thus :—²
“ What confidence is this ? Behold the snare
Of Áhriaman and give not to the winds
Íránian lives but treat these nobles fairly ;
For valour’s sake take pity on thy life,
For nevermore will such a task confront thee.”
“ Thy city,” said Bahrám Chúbína, “ yieldeth
No valour save thy sample, for all there

¹Reading with P.

² Two couplets omitted.

C. 1822

Sell fish from Summer-time¹ till snow-storms come.
 Thy work is net and pond ; thou art no man
 For spear and mace and arrow. When the sun
 Shall rise o'er yon dark mountains I will show thee
 How kings and soldiers fight. Thou shalt behold
 Those elephants and troops of his and all
 His fair presentment prostrate in the dust.”

When Sol arose from Leo, and the world
 Grew white as Rúman’s face, the trumpet sounded,
 The battle-cry went up, earth shook beneath
 The horses’ hoofs, Bahrám Chúbína ranged
 His host and mounting grasped a war-worn mace.
 They furnished for the right three thousand men,
 All-cavaliers mail-clad and veteran.
 He sent an equal number to the left,
 All valiant, vengeful horsemen. On the right
 Ízid Gashasp, who rode through rivers, led,
 And on the left Kandá Gashasp who worshipped
 The glorious Ázargashasp. Yalán-sína
 Supported them with troops as a reserve.
 Hamdán Gashasp was posted in the van,
 A man whose horse-shoes set the reeds ablaze.
 With each there were three thousand warriors,
 All fighting cavaliers with hearts of stone.
 It was proclaimed : “ Ye chiefs with golden crowns !
 Whoe’er, though faced by lion or by pard,
 Shall flee the fight, by God ! I will behead him,
 And burn his useless carcase in the fire.”

On each side of the host there was a road
 Whereby he² might retreat. On each he raised
 A bank ten cubits high. His own position
 Was at the centre, and to him there came
 The archscribe³ of the king of kings and said :—
 “ This is beyond thy power and thus to mock
 At fortune cannot prosper. Of the troops

¹ Tamúz.² Bahrám Chúbína.³ Mihrán. See p. 106.

Upon this field we are the one white hair,
 Note, on a sable ox ! No soil or stream,
 Or hill is visible, so many are
 The swordsmen of Túrán ! ”

Bahrám Chúbína

Cried at him furiously : “ Thou recreant wretch !
 Thy business is with inkstand and with paper :
 Who bade thee take the number of the host ? ”

The scribe approached Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 And said : “ Bahrám Chúbína and the Dív
 Are mates ! ”

Those scribes then sought a way to flee
 That they might not behold that day of doom.
 They feared both king of kings and arrow-rain,
 And bit their lips. On one side and afar
 From those Túránian horsemen they beheld
 A height precipitous and thither fared
 A-tremble, saying : “ We must watch the host.”

C. 1823

They gazed upon Bahrám Chúbína’s helm
 To see how he would fight when roused. That hero,
 When he had drawn his host up, left the field,
 And with loud outcries, prostrate in the dust
 Before his God, exclaimed : “ O righteous Judge !
 If in thy sight this conflict is unjust,
 And thou preferrest Sáwa to myself,
 Give my heart rest in battle and to Sáwa
 His whole desire upon the Iránians ;
 But if I undergo this toil for Thee,
 And risk my head in fight, make jubilant
 Me and my troops and by our combating
 The world all prosperous.”

Still praying loudly
 He mounted with his ox-head mace in hand.¹

King Sáwa thus addressed his host : “ Begin
 Your incantations that the Iránians

¹ Two couplets omitted.

May quail in heart and eye, and no disaster
Befall yourselves.”

Then all the sorcerers
Began their spells and hurled fire through the air.¹
Rose blast and murky cloud whence arrows showered
Upon the Iránians. Bahrám Chúbína
Exclaimed : “ Chiefs, magnates of Irán, and heroes !
Shut ye your eyes to all these magic arts,
And come all wroth to fight, for this is naught
But trick and sorcery, and they that use
Such means demand our tears.”

The Iránians shouted,
And girt their loins for bloodshed, while king Sáwa
Surveyed the field, saw that the foe recoiled not
At those black arts but came on all the more,
Led by Bahrám Chúbína, and assailed,
Like wolf a lamb, their left, brake it and charged,
Like one bemused, Bahrám Chúbína’s centre,
Who thence saw how his soldiers fled the foe,
Came, with his spear unhorsed three warriors,
And dashed them headlong to the ground, exclaim-
ing :—

C. 1824 “ This is the way to fight, this is the mode,
And how to do it ! Are ye not ashamed
Before the Lord of earth, the glorious chiefs,
And nobles ? ”

Then he made toward the right,
As ’twere a lusty lion famishing,
And brake the mighty force opposed to him,
So that their leader’s banner disappeared.
Thence he departed to his army’s centre,
To where the leader was among the troops,
And said to him : “ Perdition take it all !
If this fight last the host will be dispersed !
Look out in what direction to retreat.”

¹ Three couplets omitted.

They went and sought ; there was not any way
 Because the proper road was mounded over.
 Then to that leader said Bahrám Chúbína :—
 “ There is an iron wall in front of us,
 And only he that knoweth how to make
 A breach therein can gain the other side,
 Safe-guard himself and carry to Írán,
 And to the monarch of the brave, his life.
 All put your whole heart in it, shield your heads,
 And ply your swords. If sleepless fortune help us
 It will repay our toils with thrones and crowns.
 Let none despair of God or ye may see
 Your white day turn to gloom.”

King Sáwá thus
 Harangued his chiefs : “ Advance the elephants
 Before the host, attack in force, and make
 The world both dark and narrow to our foes.”

Bahrám Chúbína from afar beheld
 The elephants, was grieved, unsheathed his sword,
 And thus addressed his captains : “ Warriors famed !
 String up your bows of Cháh and helm ye all.
 Now by the life and head of this world’s king,
 The chosen of the lords and crown of chiefs,
 Let every one that hath artillery
 String up his bow perforce and let him fix
 His arrows, fashioned out of triple wood,
 Whose points are keen for blood, upon the trunks
 Of yonder elephants, then out with mace,
 On to the fight, and slay your enemies.”

The chieftain strung his bow and set a casque
 Of steel upon his head. He made his bow
 As ’twere a cloud in Spring and showered arrows
 Before the host : the soldiers followed him.
 The stars were dimmed by pointed, feathered shafts.
 They pierced the elephants’ trunks, and dale and
 plain

C. 1825

Grew like a pool of blood. The elephants
 Turned from the smart and fled the battlefield.
 Now when the elephants were smitten thus
 They trampled their own troops. The Iránian host
 Came on behind and earth grew like the Nile.
 All was confusion ; many died ; ill fortune
 Had all its will of them. There was a spot,
 A pleasant place, behind that stricken host
 Where, on a golden throne, fierce Sáwa sat.
 He saw his army like an iron mountain
 In flight with heads all dust and souls all gloom,
 While from behind enormous elephants
 Beyond control were trampling down the troops.
 He wept for wherefore should his army flee ?
 And mounting his bay Arab fled himself
 In dire dismay. Bahrám Chúbína came
 Pursuing like an elephant run mad,
 A lasso on his arm, a bow in hand,
 And shouted to his troops : “ Illustrious men !
 Ill fate hath marked them out.¹ Rain swords on
 them,
 And quit you in the fight like cavaliers.”

He reached the hill where erst king Sáwa sat
 Crowned on a throne of gold, beheld him thence
 Upon his mighty lion of an Arab,
 And sped forth like a tiger o'er the waste.
 He chose an arrow with a glittering point,
 Plumed with four eagle's feathers, took in hand
 His bow of Chách and laid the deer-hide thong
 Within his thumb-stall, straightened his left arm,
 And bent his right. The bow twanged as he loosed
 The shaft and pierced king Sáwa's spine, who came
 Down headlong to the dust ; the ground beneath him
 Was soaked with blood. Of that great host the king
 Bediademed was gone, gone golden throne,

¹ Couplet omitted.

And golden crown.

Such deeds the turning sky
Doth, showing neither love nor enmity.
Joy not in lofty throne and greatly fear,
What time thou feel'st secure, disaster near.

The brave Bahrám Chúbína came and dragged
The corpse face downward wallowing in the dust,
And severed that crowned head while none of all
Its kindred came anear. When the Turks found
Their king the corpse lay headless on the road.
All wailed ; cries filled the earth ; the air resounded,
And he that was the son of Sáwa said :—
“ This is God's doing, for unsleeping fortune
Is with Bahrám Chúbína.”

Multitudes

C. 1826

Died in the strait defiles. The elephants
Trod many under foot ; not one in ten
Of all that host escaped. They perished crushed
Beneath the elephants or were beheaded
Upon the battlefield, and when nine hours
Of that ill day had gone the Iránians saw
No enemy alive save prisoners bound,
Their souls and bodies pierced with grief and shafts.
The route was strewn with bards and helms whose
heads
Were suffocate therein,¹ with Indian swords,
With arrows and with bows dropped by the foe
On all sides. Earth was like a sea of blood
With slain, and everywhere were saddled steeds.

Bahrám Chúbína went his rounds to learn
Who had been slain upon the Iránian side ;
Then said he to Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
“ Give me thine aid to-day and ascertain
What slain Iránians it is ours to mourn.”

¹ “ de casques qui n'avaient pas garanti ce jour-là les têtes contre la mort.” Mohl.

He went through all the tents. One man of worship
 Was missing in the host—a chieftain named
 Bahrám, who was the son of Siyáwush,
 A valiant prince, a magnate of Írán,
 Descended from a captain of the host.
 Like one insane Kharrád went forth in quest
 Of traces of him, moving many a form
 Of slain and wounded men but found no sign.
 The captain of the host was grieved thereat,
 And cried : “ Alas ! thou prudent warrior ! ”

Howbeit the man himself appeared anon,
 A key to that locked door, and with a Turk
 Red-haired, cat-eyed, and, as thou wouldest have said,
 With heart all wrung with rage. Bahrám Chúbína
 Cried when he saw Bahrám : “ Ne’er be it thine
 To wed the dust ! ” then of that foul Turk asked :—
 “ O thou hell-visaged, banned from Paradise !
 What man art thou ? What is thy name and birth,
 For she who bare thee will have cause to weep ? ”

He said : “ A warlock I. I meddle not
 With manhood and with manliness but help
 My chief in battle when things reach a pass,
 And make him dream of what will hearten him.
 I gave thee that ill dream last night to bring
 Ill on thy head, but I must seek for means
 More potent¹ for my sorcery hath failed,
 Ill-fortune hath recoiled upon my head,
 And all my toil is wedded to the wind.
 If I get quarter from thee thou hast gained
 An all-accomplished friend.”

On hearing this
 Bahrám Chúbína mused, his heart was troubled,
 His visage wan. Anon he said : “ This man
 Might prove of service in the stress of fight,”

¹ Reading with P.

But said again : “ What did king Sáwa profit
 Through this dark-dealing warlock ? All good things
 Descend from God on fortune’s favourites,”
 Then bade cut off his head and robbed of life
 His feckless form, which done Bahrám Chúbína
 Stood up and said : “ O just and upright Judge !
 From Thee are greatness, victory, the Glory,
 High place, the diadem of king of kings,
 Distress and joy. Blest is the warrior
 That followeth Thy way.”

The archscribe came,
 And spake thus : “ Valiant Farídún, Bahrám,¹
 And Núshírwán ne’er saw one like to thee,
 O lusty paladin ! Possessed art thou
 Of lion’s courage, counsel, and device.
 May no calamity befall thy life.
 Through thee the cities of Írán all live,
 And all the paladins are but thy slaves.
 Through thee the exalted throne hath been exalted,
 And every liege escaped mishap. Thou art
 A chieftain and a chieftain’s son, and blest
 Is she that brought forth such a child, for thou
 Art glorious by birth and enterprise,
 A king all absolute in Grace and wisdom.”

Then the Sháh’s paladins and men of might
 Dispersed themselves and left the scene of fight.

§ 13

How Bahrám Chúbína sent a Letter announcing his Victory, and the Head of King Sáwa, to Hurmuzd, and his Answer

When night had curled its locks and sent thereby
 The eye to sleep, and when the Ebon Veil

¹ Bahrám Gúr probably is meant.

Appeared, the world had respite from the drum.
 Meanwhile the wheel of heaven turned apace
 In view of darksome night and hurried on
 Till from the deep a Golden Vessel rose,
 And travail waxed and slumber fined away.
 Then came the captain of the host and sent
 Some one to bid his comrades good at need :—
 “ All those that have been slain among the chiefs,
 War-cavaliers and captains of the Turks,
 Each leader of the folk, behead and set
 Behind the heads of all of them that were
 Those warriors’ diadem a flaunting flag.”

C. 1828

He had the captives and the heads collected,
 And carried from the field, then called a scribe
 And spake at large of that famed, countless host,
 The movements and the day’s vicissitudes,
 The battle and¹ the divers stratagems
 That he had used against so vast a foe,
 The toils and fighting of the Iránians,
 And how no horsemen loosed his belt all day.
 When he had written to the Sháh he chose
 A courier from the troops, first put upon
 A lance the head of Sáwa, then bade bear
 The standard of that monarch and the heads
 Of those chiefs of Túrán and cavaliers
 Of Chín withal upon a dromedary
 With all speed to the Sháh. The prisoners,
 And whatsoever spoil there was he kept
 Intact within Harát until the king
 Should make his pleasure known. He sent withal
 Experienced horsemen to escort the heads,
 And to obtain permission from the Sháh
 To march against Parmúda with the host.
 The dromedary started, and a guide
 Led on the cavaliers who toiled and trod

¹ Reading with P.

The way that quickly they might see the Sháh,
And greet him from the paladin and chiefs.

Upon their side the Turks all destitute
Went horseless, weaponless, and baggageless,
And both their cavaliers and those of Chín
Returned toward Túrán. Now when the news
Came to Parmúda he put off his crown,
While from the Turks arose a grievous wail ;
The day was bitter for those chiefs ; all heads
Were full of dust, all eyes of tears, and none
Ate or reposed or slumbered. Then he summoned
The warriors and, weeping his heart's blood,
Inquired of them : " Why did that countless host
Prove impotent upon the day of battle ? "

A counsellor replied : " We held the foe
To be but weak, but none will see in time
Of action such another cavalier
As brave Bahrám Chúbína. Not one man
For every century of ours had he,
Yet not a youth of his brave troops was wounded,
For God directed him ! I might say more,
But thou hast heard enough."

On this Parmúda
Reflected on Bahrám Chúbína's deeds,
Was wroth, turned pale of cheek, and was resolved
In his distress of heart to battle on.
A hundred thousand of the host remained—
All men of name and ready for the fray.
He led his army plain-ward from the camp
Toward the Jíhún in order to avenge
His noble father on Bahrám Chúbína.

C. 1829

What time the letter of that paladin
Came to the Sháh of ardent soul that world-lord
Was sitting on his throne and holding forth
Concerning his own fortune to the court :—
" Strange ! that no tidings of Bahrám Chúbína

Have reached our court ! What say ye, and henceforth

What shall we do ? We must advise thereon.”

Now as he spake the words the chamberlain
Came from the gate and brought the king of kings
The glad news : “ May the Sháh rejoice for ever !
Bahrám Chúbína hath prevailed o'er Sáwa,
And grown the lustre of the world in fight.”

At once the Sháh called in the messenger
Sent by Bahrám Chúbína, seating him
Above the nobles present, and inquired
Concerning host and paladin and those
Illustrious and glorious warriors.

The messenger replied : “ Exalted Sháh !
The battle went as thou didst wish. Mayst thou
Live ever happily and joyously,
For thy foe's fortune hath grown old. The heads
Both of king Sáwa and his younger son—
Him whom his father used to call Faghfúr—
Are at thy gate on spears—a sight for all
The city.”

Hearing this, the king of kings
Rose, quickly bowed, and standing in God's presence
Said : “ O Thou righteous Guide ! Thou hast des-
troyed
Our foes, Thou Fashioner of sun and moon !
Great was my wretchedness and my despair
What time the foe came headlong from his throne !
'Twas neither chieftain nor the warrior-host
That did this, but God's goodness to His slave.”

Then from the treasures that his sire had left
He had a hundred thousand drachms brought forth,
With one third first gave largess to the poor,
But the more part to his own servitors,
And sent the Fanes of Fire another third,
There to be given over to the priests

To grace the Feasts of New Year and of Sada.
 With what was left men sought out and repaired
 The ruined sites and caravansaries
 In desert places, rendering the roads
 Secure and easy. He remitted imposts
 For four years to the poor, and subject kings,
 And then had letters written to each province,
 To all the nobles, thus : " Bahrám Chúbína
 Hath triumphed o'er the foe and with his sword
 Cut off king Sáwa's head."

C. 1830

The Sháh next passed
 Two weeks in prayer ; then when the world's light
 rose

He called the envoy of the paladin,
 And seated him rejoicing 'mongst the lords ;
 Then wrote an answer instantly and set
 A tree within the garth of majesty,
 Sent too a silver throne and golden boots,
 And wealth of all sorts. All that lay between
 Haitál and the great river¹ he bestowed
 On that bold paladin² and bade : " Distribute
 Spoil ta'en on way and waste among the troops
 Except king Sáwa's private property ;
 Let that be sent to court. This done, make war
 Upon Parmúda till he is o'erthrown."

Hurmuzd sent gifts too to the Iránians,
 Confirmed by letters written to each city.
 They gave the messenger a robe of honour,
 And called thereafter for the nobles' steeds.
 Bahrám Chúbína, when the envoy came,
 Joyed well content and gave the troops much booty,
 Except the wealth pertaining to king Sáwa,
 The impure of heart ; this he dispatched with horse-
 men,
 Famed veterans of his kin, who bore it all

¹ The Oxus.² Reading with P.

To court what while the chieftain went his way,
He and his army, to renew the fray.

§ 14

How Bahrám Chúbína fought with Parmúda, Son of King Sáwa, and overcame him, and how Parmúda took Refuge in the Hold of Áwáza

Parmúda, when news came “ Bahrám Chúbína Is seeking for the throne of empire,” held A stronghold hight Áwáza where he joyed Secure. Therein he stored whate'er he had Of money, jewels, and of other treasures, And passing with his army o'er Jíhún Proceeded proudly to the seat of war. The hosts drew near for battle, dallying not Upon the march, and chose a fitting field Two stages out of Balkh. Between the hosts Two leagues of plain lay suitable for fight.

C. 1831 The next day brave Bahrám Chúbína went To view Parmúda's warriors. Parmúda Looked, saw him, and chose out upon the waste A steep height and there ranged his host until The plain was full. Thence he beheld a power, Whose aspect dazed the desert, and in front Bahrám Chúbína with his warlike head Exalted to the sky, was grieved and spake, Addressing his own troops : “ A mighty lion Is fitting mate for this protagonist ! One cannot see the sum of his array, But would not care to fight with them. The leader Is proud and fierce. The dark dust under him Will turn to blood. At night, when it is dark, Make we a camisade and banish care

And terror from our hearts."

Now when Parmúda

Returned to camp he canvassed schemes for fight,
And said : " It is an excellence of theirs
That though their troops are few their horse are
splendid,

And in the chief degree of warriors,
Well armed, and have for chief Bahrám Chúbína,
A man to whom spears are as thorns and weeds,
With heart elate at conquering king Sáwa,
And drunk with gore ; yet by the Maker's aid
I will require from that huge Mountain-mass
The vengeance owing for my father's blood."

Now when Bahrám Chúbína left Írán
To fight the Turks a reader of the stars
Said : " Stir not on the Wednesday of each week,
Or harm will follow, and thy whole emprise
Prove profitless."

Between the hosts there lay
A garden bordered by the battlefield,
And on the Wednesday of the week at dawn
Bahrám Chúbína thither went and said :—
" We will be glad to-day."

They carried thither
Rich carpetings ; he took wine, meat, and minstrels,
And coming to that garden revelled there.
Now when a watch of darksome night had passed
The outposts brought Parmúda the report :—
" Bahrám Chúbína revelleth in the garden."

The chieftain chose among his warriors
Six thousand cavaliers, all valiant men,
And sent them forth without lights to surround
The garth and take the Íránian chiefs. Now when
Bahrám Chúbína was aware thereof,
And of the plan and purpose of Parmúda,
He thus addressed Yalán-sína : " O chieftain !

Break us a passage through the garden-wall."

Bahrám Chúbína and Ízid Gashasp,

With other warriors, mounted on their steeds.

C. 1832

They issued from the breach ; who knoweth how
 Those warriors issued ? At the garden-gate
 Arose the clarion-blare : the chieftain charged.
 They quickly made a second breach and smote
 The foe. Bahrám Chúbína, dart in hand,
 And half bemused, assailed them. Few escaped him,
 So eager was his drunken head for blood !
 As when smiths' hammers meet the steel so rang
 The chieftains' blows, and trunkless heads were
 strewn

Between the garth and king Parmúda's camp.

Now when Bahrám Chúbína had returned
 To his own camp he planned a camisade,
 And, midnight past, girt up his loins and led
 His powers against the foe. Among the Turks
 There was no scout that saw him. When he reached
 His fighting-ground the blare of trumpets rose.
 Roused in the darkness by the clarions' din
 The warrior Turks leaped up, and such a shout
 As would have split a mighty lion's ears,
 Ascended.¹ None knew who another was
 Amid the lengthy lances and the gloom.
 The Írániāns made their swords flash fire and set
 The earth and air ablaze. Of those brave Turks
 But few were left ; the stones were coralline
 With blood. Like flying dust the leader fled,
 Dry-mouthed and livid-lipped, and thus it was
 Till dawn began to breathe and sombre night
 Drew in its skirts, and then the Írániān chief
 O'ertook the foe and roaring like a lion
 Cried to Parmúda : " O thou runaway !
 Mix not henceforth with warriors. Thou'rt no man

¹ Couplet omitted.

Of battle but a very child : 'tis fit
Thou suck thy mother's milk."

The king replied :—

" How long, O ravening lion ! wilt thou be
Thus keen for bloodshed ? Crocodiles in water,
And pards on land, grow satiate with the blood
Of heroes in the fight. Will naught sate thee ?
Methinketh that thou art a ravening lion,
Thou who hast stricken off king Sáwa's head—
A man beloved through life by circling heaven—
And slaughtered so his troops that sun and moon
Feel ruth for them, while as for me who am
That valiant king's memorial, know that thou
Hast slain me too with sheer distress. We all
Are mother-born for death and have surrendered
Our necks thereto since remedy is none.¹
I flee ; thou followest but wilt not take me
Till my time come. If sword in hand I turn
Upon thee either of us may be slain.
Be not so hasty and so hot of head,
For that becometh neither chief nor host.
Now will I fare to mine own tent and there
Seek to retrace my steps. I will indite
A letter to the king in fashion such
As fortune maketh needful, and if he
Accept me and protect me from attack
I will become a bondslave at his court,
And wholly banish lordship from my heart.
Put from thee war and strife. Thou camest to
fight ;
Now feast in all good will."

C. 1833

Bahrám Chúbína,

On hearing this, turned back, for that curst foe
Had grown so gracious. When the troops had
rested,

¹ Couplet omitted.

And come to king Parmúda's camp, they fared
 About the field, cut off the chieftains' heads,
 And heaped them till the pile grew mountain-like :
 The hero's men of name called it Bahrám Tal.¹
 Whate'er they saw of horsemen's equipage,
 And other booty, they assembled there.

Bahrám Chúbína wrote the king a letter
 About Parmúda and his countless host,
 Narrating " all that hath befallen us
 Both from the Turks and from their warlike king,
 Whose heart was eager to avenge his sire,
 And who departed to Áwáza hence."

Parmúda, on his side, made fast the hold,
 And sat down deep in thought, while in pursuit
 Came countless troops and circled it about ;
 But though so many leaguered it none knew
 Parmúda's plans. Bahrám Chúbína said :—
 " The toils of war are better than delay,
 And so he told Yal-án-sína to choose
 Three thousand of the horsemen on the field,
 And further that Ízid Gashasp should call
 To horse four thousand warriors of the troops.
 He bade behead forthwith all whom they found,
 Thus haply from the hold the king to draw
 When all the waste a-stream with blood he saw.

§ 15

*How Bahrám Chúbína sent a Message to Parmúda
 and how Parmúda asked Quarter*

C. 1834 Bahrám Chúbína stayed before the hold
 Three days but sent at sun-rise on the fourth

¹ Tal is a heap or mound.

This message to Parmúda as the chief
 Both of the realm and race : “ O noble king
 Of Chín and of the Turks ! why hast thou chosen
 To occupy this stronghold ? Where are now
 King Sáwa’s passion to possess the world,
 And all his treasure, power, and elephants,
 His armour for the steeds and ardent chiefs ?
 Where are thy witchcraft and thy sorcery
 That now thou dost seclude thyself ? Time was
 When all the Turks’domain was not enough
 For thee, thy father peerless in the world.
 Now womanlike thou sittest in this hold,
 With full heart, beating thine own head. Undo
 The castle-gate, seek quarter, ask of me
 To plead for thee before my king. Dispatch
 Thy treasures of dínárs and all thy purses
 From this hold plain-ward or if thou keep them
 Keep not the realm for kings despise dínárs.
 Myself will intercede for thee at court
 Because I am the champion of Írán ;
 Thee will I make chief of all chiefs and treat thee
 Above thine aims and thine imaginings.
 Now if thou hast some hidden policy,
 One that will make thy gloomy prospects bright,
 Confide in me ; since thine affairs are thus
 Be not thou distant. I have given thee quarter,
 As thou dost know, and opened thee a way
 To scape by, else thou hadst been lifeless now,
 As is thy sire, and seen not son or kindred :
 But if thou hast companions for the fight,
 With treasure and abundance of dínárs,
 Exert thyself herein and take revenge,
 For troops are not to seek where there is treasure.”

The messenger arriving told his message,
 Which when Parmúda, the ambitious, heard
 He answered : “ Say : ‘ If so thou canst forbear

To search out this world's secrets. Thou perchance
 Hast made too bold therewith because thy toils
 Have brought forth fruit ; yet in thy victory
 Joy not ; though thou art young the world is old.
 The secret of the turning sky is known
 To none ; it never sheweth us its face.
 To mock becometh not a general.
 I too had soldiers, elephants, and drums,
 C. 1835 But heaven above is practised in deceit,
 So couple not thy heart with arrogance.
 My sire, the world-lord, that discerning man,
 Whom thou beheldest on the day of fight,
 Had earth as bondslave of his horse's hoofs,
 And heaven revolved according to his will ;
 Yet sought he what it was not his to seek,
 And turned not from his wrongful purposes.
 His prowess is o'erlaid by ridicule,
 And enemies bemoak him from afar.
 As for thy saying that thy host exceedeth
 The revolutions of the sun and moon
 In sum, and that thy steeds and elephants
 Seem grass-seeds scattered by a wind-mill's sails,
 All that will pass away and thou withal
 Wilt cease to joy and to illume the world.
 Fear sharp fate's vengeance yet ;¹ it may infuse
 Some of its bane in this thine antidote.
 When one hath made a trade of shedding blood,
 And harassing the hearts of enemies,
 Men will shed his blood also by the token
 That he hath shed the blood of other chiefs.
 Wreck though thou mayst the country of the Turks
 Still in the end they will exact revenge.
 If I shall come to thee forthwith I fear
 That thou wilt make an end of me. Thou art
 A slave ; I am a king. Shall I abase me

¹ " Crains le sort, qui sème la vengeance." Mohl.

Before a thrall ? I will not come to battle
 Without a host or those that wish me well
 Will call me mad ; but it is no disgrace
 For me to ask for quarter from thy Sháh
 In mine extremity. When that is done
 The hold, the treasure, and the men are thine ;
 Thy wishes will be law in this famed land.' "

The messenger returned with this reply ;
 Bahrám Chúbína was rejoiced thereby.

§ 16

*How Bahrám Chúbína asked of Hurmuzd a Warrant
 to spare the Life of Parmúda and the Answer*

They wrote a letter that might bear good fruit
 To that victorious and exalted Sháh :—
 " The Khán of Chín is suppliant for quarter ;
 He is beleaguered by Bahrám Chúbína,
 And needeth a safe-conduct under seal ;
 The news thereof will be a feast to him.
 Now since the suppliant is the Khán of Chín,
 Fall'n from such dignity to wretchedness,
 The king of kings should pity one whose worship
 Hath passed away."

Now when the letter reached
 The Sháh he cloudward raised his glorious crown.
 He sent and summoned the Iránians,
 And set them by the famous throne of kingship,
 Bade read the letter and strew gems upon
 The reader, saying : " I thank my God and praise
 Him

Three watches of the night in that the Khán
 Of Chín is now our subject and high heaven

C. 1836

Our crown. He raised his head to touch the sky,
 And thought himself the monarch of the world ;
 But now this leader who attacked our coasts
 Is made the slave of one still mightier,
 And so the Turks' chief and the prince of Chín
 Is offering his homage unto us.
 Praise to the Ruler of the sun and moon,
 The Source of this supremacy of ours.¹
 Do ye too offer praise to God and be
 More instant in the practice of all good.”

He called the envoy of the paladin,
 Gave him a long and gracious interview,
 Called for a girdle set with royal gems,
 A kingly robe of honour and a steed
 With trappings decked with gold and every buckle
 Bejewelled. To the messenger withal
 He gave dínárs, a purse, and much beside
 To be a present to that prudent man,²
 Whom he held chief among the paladins,
 Bade come a scribe and had a letter written
 On silk : “ Parmúda Khán is mine ally,
 And in all regions under my protection.
 God is the witness to this deed and seal ;
 His slaves are we and He is Lord.”

He wrote

An answer also to that world-aspirant,³
 A letter all good will like Paradise,
 And said : “ Dispatch Parmúda to my court
 With all observance but without his host.
 The booty that thou tookest from his troops—
 A service which thou didst right zealously—
 Send thither too, whate'er of it is worthy.
 The Maker aideth thee. Spy out the foe,
 And if he hath a stronghold let thy guards
 Seize and consume it through thy glorious fortune,

¹ Couplet omitted. ² Bahrám Chúbína. ³ *Id.*

And world-illumining presages. If thou
 Hast need of further troops they shall be thine,
 And there shall be addition to thy treasures.
 State thy demands in writing ; we will send
 Whatever troops are needed. In thy letter
 Name those Írániāns that have acted well
 In thine esteem ; their toils shall be rewarded.
 Thy troops the guardians of the march shall be ;
 The crown of paladins I give to thee.”

§ 17

*How Hurmuzd's Letter granting Quarter to Parmúda
 reached Bahrám Chúbína, and how Bahrám
 Chúbína was wroth with Parmúda*

Now when this letter reached the paladin
 That famous chieftain's heart grew young ; the
 letter

Astounded him. He sent and called the Írániāns,
 And showed the Sháh's gifts ; all that saw them
 blessed him.

He showed the Írániāns too all that Hurmuzd
 Had written of them. The warriors acclaimed ;
 Thou wouldest have said : “ Earth's surface shook.”

He sent too

The honourable safe-conduct for Parmúda,
 Giv'n by the monarch, to the hold to him ;
 His darkened soul grew bright. With many blessings
 Upon the king he left his famous fortress,
 And leaving to Bahrám Chúbína all
 The wealth therein made ready to depart.
 Descending from the hold the proud Parmúda
 Bestrode his charger swift as flying dust,

C. 1837

And set forth with his troops without regard
 To bold Bahrám Chúbína who chagrined
 Thereat, and though his captive was a king,
 Sent after him and had him brought afoot,
 And running in the presence of the troops ;
 Then said to him indignantly : “ Are such
 Your manners in Túrán and Chín—to go
 Without leave asked of me ? Sheer folly this ! ”

Parmúda said : “ Once I was raised o'er folk,
 But now am humbled and a suppliant,
 Cast vilely from the zenith of my power.
 To-day withal thou art not generous
 In bringing me before thee, evil one !
 Now that I have the letter of safe-conduct
 I purpose going to the king. Perchance
 He will receive me brother-like ; misfortune
 May grow more light to me. What wouldest thou
 more ?

I have surrendered fortune, home, and goods.”

Bahrám Chúbína raged with flashing eyes
 In indignation at Parmúda’s words,
 And struck him in excitement with a whip—
 Behaviour only fit for miscreants.
 They bound Parmúda’s feet forthwith and made
 A scanty tent his prison. Said thereat
 C. 1838 Kharrád, son of Barzín : “ This paladin
 And wisdom are not mates ! ”

He sought the archscribe,
 And said : “ This mighty paladin possesseth
 Not one gnat’s wing of wisdom !¹ so he taketh
 No heed of any one, and we must go,
 And say to him : ‘ This is remediless.’
 His temper is his great calamity.”

The two departed to Bahrám Chúbína
 With pallid cheeks and counsel on their tongues,

¹ Reading with P.

And told him : “ Thou hast given to the winds
 Thy toil ! Oh ! be that noble head of thine
 Unfilled with fire ! ”

Ware of his foul behaviour,
 That into water had been flung a brick
 Already dried, he in his penitence
 Released the Khán and was in great concern.
 He sent the Khán a steed with golden trappings,
 And Indian falchion with a golden scabbard,
 Moreover went forthwith to him to make
 His dark soul bright, there tarried till the Khán
 Had armed and mounted on a speedy steed,
 And then escorted him upon his way,
 Perceiving that the prince’s visage loured.
 When it was time to part Bahrám Chúbína
 Told him : “ Thou hast a secret grudge against me ;
 Yet, though it be so, tell it not the Sháh ;
 No credit will result to thee therefrom.”

The Khán replied to him : “ It is of fortune
 That I complain ; I leave it all to God.
 I am not such an one as would desire
 To speak in many words of other men ;
 Still if thy monarch hath no news hereof
 He is not worthy of his high estate.
 It was the turning sky that fettered me ;
 I tell not of ill usage from a slave.”

Thereat Bahrám Chúbína paled ; he writhed,
 But with an effort swallowed down his wrath,
 And thus returned reply : “ An instance this
 Of what the famous nobles used to say :—
 ‘ Forbear thine utmost seed of ill to cast,
 For time will give thee fruit thereof at last.’¹
 To what end did I deck for thee my heart,
 Attempt to do thee kindness in the world,
 And wrote its lord a letter hiding all

¹ Couplet omitted.

Thine own shortcomings ? ”

“ That,” the Khán rejoined,

“ Is past, and all the past hath turned to wind.
By God ! I do not owe thee any grudge,
Or cherish in my heart the former strife.
Thy kindness hath been greater than this wrong,
And thou didst guide me on the way to good ;
But just as there is insolence in war,
So is there courtesy in time of peace,
And if the two are all the same to thee
Thy wisdom out of question is but small,
And when a leader is too wise to take
His lord’s commands then evil will befall him.
Moreover one should tread God’s path and purge
All darkness from the heart. ’Twere well for thee
To say no more for past ill is but wind.”

On hearing this Bahrám Chúbína said :—

‘ Methought ’twould out, but no mishap will come
Of thy complaint for I will hide it up
With painted silk. On thine arrival say
Whate’er thou wilt ; ’twill diminish not my lustre.”

The Khán said : “ Every king that taketh not
Account of good and ill, but passeth over
His slave’s misdeeds in silence, be assured
Is witless, and when malcontents afar—
Allies or other kings—observe this thing
They will term thee unseemly and light-headed,
And him the foolish monarch of Írán.”

Bahrám Chúbína paled, and when Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, had taken note thereof
He feared that wrathful and bloodthirsty man
Would hurl Parmúda from his steed to dust,
And said : “ O general of the Sháh ! repress
Thy wrath and quit that path because the Khán
Saith well, so list to him and think no ill,
For had cool words ne’er passed the hearts of neither

Would have been pained."

" This ill-conditioned one,"
Bahrám Chúbína said, " would join his sire."

The Khán said : " Wrong me not. Reft as I am
Of mine own father I may well die young.
All those that in the world are like thyself,
With heads all dust-cloud and with hearts all fume,
Imagine ill, accord to none, but raise
Themselves by craft and cruelty. I fear not
The king of kings ; from him bale or relief
Is well. He is my peer among the great,
And not a slave malignantly disposed
Towards me, but is gentle, wise, high-born,
And greatly mindful of the men of name.
I charge thee by the soul and by the head
Of Sháh Húrmuzd that thou return forthwith.
Give me no more replies and insolence ;
Say naught and hear naught."

When Bahrám Chúbína
Heard he returned to camp in vengeful mood,
And thus that proven warrior harangued
The prudent chiefs : " Kharrád, son of Barzín,
And those wise men, the archscribe and arch-
mages,
Shall write a letter to the world's king, telling
All that hath passed in public and in private."

The general said further to the chief
And other archimages : " Men of wisdom !
Depart hence to the hold, be diligent,
Companion with the wind and ascertain
What quantity of wealth is hoarded there."

With fearful hearts the scribes set forth. From
dawn
Until three watches of the night had passed
They blacked much paper but they had not done.
There was not room to move for precious things,

C. 1840

Hoards of the era of Afrásiyáb,
 And of Arjásp, so ancient yet unspent,
 Gold coins and jewels won from sea and mine
 By favour of the sky ; such were the treasures
 Within Áwáza hold world-famous then.
 Among the goods of Siyáwush came first
 A belt with jewelled buckles and such earrings
 As no one high or low besides possessed,
 Which Kai Khusráu had given Luhrásp and he
 Thereafter gave them to Gushtásp. Arjásp
 Gat them and stored them there, none knoweth
 when.

They wrote a list of all the precious things
 That were laid up within the treasury,
 But no one in the world, astrologer,
 Or noble prince had knowledge of the sum.
 Bahrám Chúbína sent a scribe, a man
 Shrewd, eloquent, and mindful, who collected
 The booty from the hold and battlefield.
 There were a pair of earrings in the spoil,
 And pair of boots with patterns formed by gems ;
 The stuff was interwoven with gold threads
 Bestrung with precious stones. There were withal
 Two gold-embroidered curtains from Yaman,
 Whereof each one was seven mans¹ in weight.
 Now through presumption and perversity
 The captain of the host, contemplating
 No scrutiny, put secretly aside
 The pairs of boots and curtains of Yaman,
 And made no entry of them in his list.
 He then gave orders to Ízid Gashasp
 That he and all his cavaliers should mount,
 Select a thousand warriors from the host,
 And take the booty to the monarch's gate.
 The warriors having mounted on their steeds,

¹ See Vol. i., p. 290 *note*.

Ízid Gashasp bore off that mass of spoil,
 And full of joy and merriment they took
 A hundred caravan-loads to Írán.
 Íránian horsemen closed the long array,
 The Khán with his own nobles led the way.

§ 18

*How Parmúda came before Hurmuzd with the
 Treasures sent by Bahrám Chúbina*

With treasure, gifts, and troops the Khán drew near C. 1841
 The monarch of the world who heard and mounted
 With crown on head and mace in hand, and thus
 Came to the gate. When from the porch he saw
 The visage of the Khán he paused to note
 If at the sight of him that prince and troops
 Would light down from their steeds. Parmúda
 watched,

Full of concern, if he would turn away,
 Then, mounted still, came with the archimage,
 Ízid Gashasp, whereat the Sháh, the world-lord,
 Bestirred him with his troops. The Khán alighted
 And hastened toward the Sháh, without delay
 Remounting his black Arab, while the Great King
 Abode not with Parmúda in the porch,
 And rode his fleet steed off; but when the Khán
 Was following, the keeper of the curtain
 Laid hold upon his reins forthwith. Parmúda
 Alighted instantly and manifested
 His own diplomacy by that submission.

Now when the Khán approached the royal throne
 The king of kings received him with all favour,
 And having welcomed set him in the presence,
 Repenting of the past hostility.
 They lodged him fitly in the pleasant palace

Prepared for him and brought whate'er he needed.
 A scribe was charged to lodge the retinue
 Hard by. The Sháh, on hearing of the wealth
 Brought by Parmúda, sent it to the park,
 And charged therewith the keeper of the camels.
 The eighth day, when Parmúda was refreshed
 From all his toils, the Sháh ordained a feast,
 And, when the Khán was seated at the board
 At court and in the presence of the world-lord,
 Bade bring the camel-loads before the chiefs.
 One counted up the porters ; on that day
 There were ten thousand hired. The next, at dawn,
 Hurmuzd had wine set forth and took his seat,
 And from the park came fifty thousand bales
 As well as parcels on the porters' backs.

C. 1842

The baggage filled a hundred treasuries.
 The Sháh, when his task was achieved, bade bring
 Before the presence publicly a bale
 Of stuffs, bejewelled earrings, and a girdle
 Compact, thou wouldest have said, of gold and gems.
 These he bestowed with many words of praise
 Upon the messenger who kissed the ground,
 While from the banquet-hall arose acclaim :—
 “ Victorious be the Sháh.”

He at that time
 Said to his confidant Ízid Gashasp :—¹
 “ What seest thou in Bahrám Chúbína’s exploit ?
 He maketh war to cease right manfully.”

The scribe Ízid Gashasp replied : “ O Sháh,
 Who art observant and of ardent mind !
 When at a feast the theme is such know there
 Will likewise be but ill-conditioned fare.”²

¹ Perhaps we ought to read “ Áyín Gashasp ” here and below.
 See pp. 75, 174 *seq.*

² With changes of reading Mohl translates : “ sache que les mets
 d'une fête ou c'est le mot corneille (djoubin) qui forme le refrain
 doivent être étranges.”

The Sháh became suspiciously inclined
On hearing this ; misdoubtings filled his mind.

§ 19

How Hurmuzd heard of the Ill-doing of Bahrám Chúbína and made a Compact with the Khán

Then came a lusty camel-post and brought
This letter from the archscribe : “ May the world-
lord

Be ever joyful and his head and crown
For ever present in his servant’s thoughts.
Know that there were two curtains of Yaman
Among the spoil, boots decked with gems uncut,
The earrings too of noble Siyáwush,
Who left us wisdom as his monument,
And these the paladin bare off with him¹
No marvel since he underwent the toil.”

Hurmuzd said to Parmúda : “ Tell me all
That thou didst see hereof.”

The fallen king
Confirmed the scribe’s report. The haughty Sháh
Was wroth thereat and said : “ Bahrám Chúbína
Doth err, uplifting to the moon his head.
For one thing he hath struck the Khán of Chín—
An act the outcome of an evil nature—
And then would nothing but these earrings serve
His turn ? Perhaps he hath become a king.
His toil hath turned to wind and all his knowledge
And justice have become corrupt.”

This said,
He called the Khán and having seated him
Upon the famous throne they feasted there

¹ Reading with P.

C. 1843 Till night spread out her musky tresses black.
 Then said the Sháh : “ If thou wilt league with me
 Thou shalt partake my honey.”

As he sat

He grasped the Khán’s hand, and Parmúda mar-
 velled.

The Sháh proceeded : “ Swear to me afresh,
 And make a new departure, not to break
 With me or with the nobles of this folk
 On thy return.”

Parmúda swore forthwith :—

“ By shining daylight and night azure-dim,
 By God who hath of right supremacy,
 The Artificer of Jupiter and Venus,
 The great Sháh’s crown and throne, Ázargashasp,
 The signet and the diadem, the Khán
 Shall not grow alien from the Sháh in heart,
 And vex him not in aught.”

This sworn, they rose

And sought their couches.

When the yellow sun
 O’er-topped the mountains, and the kings awoke,
 The noble Sháh prepared a present—ware
 Of gold and silver, horses, coronets,
 Of girdles gemmed and golden, armlets, torques,
 And earrings, Arab steeds with golden trappings,
 And Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
 Dispatched them to the Khán, consorted with him
 Two stages and the more part of the third,
 And having bidden him farewell returned.

The paladin, on hearing of the gifts
 Presented by the monarch of the world,
 And how the Khán was coming back rejoicing,
 Rode forth to meet him with the Iránian chiefs.
 He stored provisions where the Khán would pass
 In town and village, station, hill, and plain,

And hurried on in shame at his ill temper
 To make excuse in person. When he saw
 Parmúda he did reverence but the Khán
 Proved wholly adverse, would accept of naught
 That he had brought of provand, purse, or slave,
 And on the way ignored him utterly.
 Bahrám Chúbína fared three stages thus,
 And not once did Parmúda call for him.
 Upon the fourth the Khán sent one to say :—
 “ Return for thou hast toiled enough.”

Thereat

Bahrám Chúbína left him and in wrath
 Set face toward Balkh where he abode in dudgeon,
 Repenting of his acts with aching heart.
 Withal the world-lord was displeased with him,
 And fumes of anger filled the monarch’s soul
 First at that outrage to the Khán wherein
 Bahrám Chúbína had done shamefully.
 And next that he had dared to lay his hand
 On certain of the spoil without command.

C. 1844

§ 20

How Hurmuzd wrote a chiding Letter to Bahrám Chúbína and sent him a Distaff-case, Cotton, and Women’s Raiment

The king then wrote thus to Bahrám Chúbína :—
 “ Unconscionable div ! perceiv’st thou not
 That all our excellencies are from God,
 And yet thou sittest on the vault of heaven ?
 Hast thou forgot my pains, troops, toil, and treasure ?
 Thou keepest not the way of paladins,

But raisest thy head skyward. Thou hast turned
From my behest and acted otherwise.

Here is the robe of honour meet for thee,
Agreeable and appropriate to thine acts."

The Sháh, when he had sealed this, ordered one
To bring him a black distaff-case with distaff
And cotton, much unworthy gear, withal
A blue silk shift, red drawers, and yellow coif,
Chose an ignoble messenger to match
With that unseemly gift and said : " Convey
These to Bahrám Chúbína. Say to him :—
' O worthless miscreant ! thou didst bind the Khán,
And gloat upon great men's mishaps, but I
Will fetch thee from thy seat and hold thee naught
Henceforth.' "

The messenger, these words in mind,
Departed with the gift and went like wind.

§ 21

*How Bahrám Chúbína put on the Woman's Dress
and showed himself therein to the Chiefs of the Host*

Whenas Bahrám Chúbína saw the present
Sent with the letter he endured in silence.

He thought : " This is my guerdon ! So the Sháh
Is now my foe though he hath not devised
This wrong but mine ill-wishers slandered me.
The world-lord is the master of his slaves,
And if he putteth me to shame 'tis well.

C. 1845

I did not think that enemies of mine
Had access to the Sháh. Since I left court
In haste with but few troops all men have witnessed
My deeds, my sorrows and my toils and hardships.

If these toils are rewarded by a shame
 That is the portion of the infamous
 I will complain of circling heaven to God
 For having docked me thus of all its love."

He called upon the Judge that giveth good,
 Then, having donned the red and yellow garb,
 And set before him the black spindle-case,
 And all the other things sent by the Sháh,
 He summoned to him all the mighty men,
 The nobles of the monarch of the world.
 These came forth from the army to the chief,
 Whose gloomy soul was full of anxious thoughts.
 They came, both young and old, were all astound,
 And mused, on seeing their paladin so clad.
 He said : " A robe of honour from the Sháh !
 Ye saw and heard of what I did and how
 I combated with my two-headed dart.
 The Sháh despaired about the royal throne ;
 The world was dark and I illumined it.
 I have put on me this repugnant garb
 According to the exalted king's command.
 The Sháh is world-lord and we are his slaves,
 Our hearts and souls are full of love for him.
 What are your views, ye witnesses ! herein ?
 What answer make we to the king of earth ? "

All cried : " Famed paladin and worshipful !
 If this be thy worth with the Sháh the troops
 Are dogs at court ! Note what the ancient sage
 Observed at Rai when angry with Ardshír :—
 ' I grow averse from archmage and Sháh's throne
 When he regardeth not my weal and woe.'
 How canst thou seek for honour from a man
 That honoureth not thee ? "

He said : " Forbear :
 The Sháh is source of honour to his troops ;
 His slaves are we ; he giveth, we receive."

The Írániāns said : “ We will not arm hence forth ;
 We will not have him in Írán as Sháh,
 Or, as our general, Bahrám Chúbína.”
 They spake and went forth from his presence
 left
 The palace of the chieftain¹ for the plain,
 But he refrained his lips and at the most
 Gave only prudent counsels to the host.

§ 22

*How Bahrám Chúbína went to hunt and saw a Lady
 who foretold the Future to him*

C. 1846 Two weeks passed, then Bahrám Chúbína left
 His palace for the waste. In front of him
 There was a forest furnished well with trees —
 The very place for lucky revellers.
 Upon the mead he saw an onager,
 And none will see a fairer one. He followed
 At leisure, heating not his steed. Appeared
 Within that woodland-chase a narrow path,
 Which when that gallant onager had traversed
 A pleasance next was seen upon the plain.
 Bahrám Chúbína, marking this, proceeded
 Until a splendid palace came in sight.
 Led by the onager he turned and rode
 Thereto ; behind him was Ízid Gashasp,
 To whom he gave his fleet steed's reins and said :—
 “ May wisdom ever be thy mate,” then entered
 The porch alone. Ízid Gashasp the while
 Abode without and held the noble steed.
 Behind him hurrying came Yalán-sína

¹ Reading with P.

Armed on a swift horse. Brave Ízid Gashasp
 Said : “ Lion ! enter thou and find out whither
 Our chief, the heroic captain of the host,
 Our succourer, hath gone.”

Yalán-sína

Made for the palace with an anxious heart
 To seek the chief. He saw it and its hall
 Magnifical ; its like he had not seen
 Or heard of in Irán. Upon one side
 Thereof there was a cupola whose top
 Was viewless through its height and under it
 A throne of gold with steps begemmed. The throne
 Was covered with brocade of Rúm in patterns
 Picked out with jewels on a ground of gold.
 Upon the throne there sat a lady crowned,
 Of cypress-height and with a face like Spring.¹

Beside it was a seat and thereupon
 The captain of the host while many slaves,
 Idols fay-faced and blooming, were around.
 On seeing Yalán-sína the lady bade
 A handmaid : “ Hasten to yon lion-heart,
 Fair mate, and say : ‘ Thou mayst not enter here.
 Stay with thy comrades. He will come anon,
 But go thou first. As from Bahrám Chúbína
 Speak this and ease them as to his return.’ ”

She sent some also to his retinue
 To bring the warriors’ horses to the stalls,
 And take good care of all their equipage.
 The gardener unlocked the garden-gate
 By hest of that fair hostess,² and they set
 About the garden victuals past conceit.
 Whenas the warriors had eaten bread
 They led the chargers to the place assigned.
 Bahrám Chúbína, when he left the lady,
 Spake thus : “ May Jupiter espouse thy crown.”

C. 1847

¹ Three couplets omitted.

² One couplet omitted.

She answered : “ Be victorious and ever
Of patient heart and wise.¹ Go thou ! the throne
And the Iránian diadem are thine.

The world shall be set straight by thee, so win it
By might and sword from dark dust to the stars.”²

Now when he came forth from that garth of roses
Thou wouldest have said : “ He weepeth blood ! ”

So changed

Was he in temper and in talk that thou
Hadst said : “ He raiseth to the Pleiades
His head.”

Anon the onager appeared ;
The chieftain followed after on his steed,
And it was so that till he cleared the forest
The onager still served him as a guide.
He went back to the city from the chace,
But spake not of the matter to the host.
Kharrád, son of Barzín, regarded him
And said thus : “ O thou chief that speakest sooth !
What was this marvel seen and heard by none
That happened in the chace ? ”

The paladin
Vouchsafed no answer but in dudgeon sought
The palace, and none else dared ask : “ What might
This matter mean, this vision of delight ? ”

§ 23

*How Bahrám Chúbína assumed the royal Style and
how Kharrád, Son of Barzín, and the Archscribe³
fled*

C. 1848 The next day, when the uplands silvered over,
And when yon yellow shining Lamp appeared,

¹ *Id.* ² *Id.* ³ Izid Gashasp in the original. Cf. p. 106.

Bahrám Chúbína spread a carpeting
 Made of brocade of Chín, and thou hadst said
 That earth had turned to sky. Throughout the
 palace

He ranged gold seats and cushions of brocade
 Of gold. They placed a golden ante-throne
 Whereon the captain of the host sat down,
 Then held a session like the king of kings,
 And placed upon his head the crown of greatness.

The archscribe marked Bahrám Chúbína's con-
 duct,

And, knowing him to be both bold and strong,
 Went and retailed his knowledge, sight or hearsay,
 Before Kharrád, son of Barzín, who listened,
 Knew that his own toils had been vain, and said :—
 “Take not this lightly, O thou noble scribe !
 This king of kings of ours hath played the fool
 In sending as a gift the distaff-case,
 Not knowing that this battle-loving Lion
 Would thus revolt. We must not talk of this,
 But when 'tis midnight fare forth to the Sháh,
 And say : ‘Bahrám Chúbína's heart is set
 Upon the crown ; the seat too under him
 Is ivory.’ ”

They canvassed all the case,
 And made a shift to flee, prepared the pretext,
 And fled from Balkh by night. The chief, informed
 Thereof, and knowing well their clear, shrewd minds,
 Said to Yalán-sína : “Go in pursuit
 Of those two dotards with a hundred horse.”

He overtook the archscribe, raged at him,
 As 'twere a wolf, took from him all he had,
 And brought him back made fast in heavy bonds,
 Back to Bahrám Chúbína so that he
 Might slay the innocent. The paladin
 Said : “Doer of div's work ! why didst thou quit me

Without my leave ? ”

“ O paladin ! ” he answered,

“ Kharrád, son of Barzín, made me afraid.

He said : ‘ We may not tarry ; thy delay
Will please those only that speak ill of thee,
For when the heroic captain of the host,
Bahrám Chúbína, holdeth court as Sháh

C. 1849

There is a fear lest thou and I be slain

Save we return.’ ”

Bahrám Chúbína said :—

“ Just so : one must consult o'er good and ill.”

He then restored and with advantages
From his own treasures what the scribe had lost,
Then said to him : “ Go thou and ponder o'er
Thy conduct in this case and flee no more.”

§ 24

*How Hurmuzd received News of Bahrám Chúbína's
Doings, and how Bahrám Chúbína sent a Frail
of Swords to Hurmuzd*

Kharrád, son of Barzín, for his part rode,
Escaping notice, till he reached the Sháh,
To whom he told his news, suppressing naught,
Of wood and meadow, course of onager,
Strait pathway and Bahrám Chúbína's sojourn ;
Told of the palace and the jewelled throne,
The slave-girls and the lady with the crown :
He told whatever he had seen and heard.
The Sháh mused at the tale, laid it to heart,
And sighed as he remembered what the archmage
And fortune-teller had said : “ Bahrám Chúbína
Will turn him from thy throne.”¹

¹ See pp. 107, 108.

Forthwith he summoned
The high priest, set Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Within the room and said to him : “ Relate
The adventures of thy journey.”

Thus enjoined
He oped his lips and told it all. The Sháh
Said to the high priest : “ What importeth this ?
We must consult at large. The onager
That led him through the wood, the palace seen
Amidst the wilderness, the lady crowned
Upon the golden throne, the slaves in waiting
As on a queen—the account is like a dream
Suggested by old tales ! ”

The high priest thus
Made answer to the monarch of the world :—
“ Beneath that onager there was a dív
Who sought to lead Bahrám Chúbína wrong,
And make perverseness show within his heart.
The palace, be assured, was sorcerer’s work,
The lady on the throne an impious witch,
Who on this wise to hearten him the more
Displayed the crown and throne of majesty.
All eager and bemused he went from her :
Be sure that he will ne’er come back to hand.
His heart was wounded by thy distaff-case,
And going to that dív-witch made it worse.
It was not well to send the ignoble robe
To one so overweening, for thereby
The Íránians were estranged and ceased to trust
The king of kings. So now devise a scheme
To bring the army back to court from Balkh.”

The king repented having acted so
About the cotton and the gaudy dress,
And asked Kharrád, son of Barzín : “ What say
The troops there of that lady ? ”

He replied :—

C. 1850

“ As for that crownéd lady, all the troops
Call her, O king ! ‘ Bahrám Chúbína’s Luck,’
Which will be very great and glorious.”

The king, on hearing, greatly feared the ills
That fortune had in store. Ere long there came
One from the paladin, the cavalier,
And brought a frail of swords with points all bent.¹
He set them down before the Sháh who looked
Upon that iron gear, bade break the swords,
Replace them in that ill-conditioned frail,
And then return them to Bahrám Chúbína :
No word was spoken but the intent was clear.
Bahrám Chúbína oped the frail, beheld
The long swords snapped at point and then replaced,
And, wayward as he was, grew full of thought.
He called the Iránians round the frail and said :—
“ Behold the king’s gift ! Underrate it not.
It meaneth that this host is little worth,
And not the head of one of us will scape.”

The troops thought much of what the Sháh had
done,
And of their paladin’s address. They said :—
“ One day our monarch sendeth us as gifts
A distaff and a gaudy robe ; anon
He giveth broken swords—a present worse
Than striking or abuse. Ne’er be such Sháh
Upon the throne ! May none remember him,
And if again the offspring of Gashasp—
Bahrám Chúbína—ride on that court’s dust
Then may they perish, skin and marrow both,
He and his worthless sire ! ”

The chieftain heard,
Saw how Hurmuzd had vexed the host and said :—
“ Be vigilant and let your minds be clear
Because Kharrád, son of Barzín, hath told

¹ “ *par l’usage qu’on en avait fait dans la bataille.* ” Mohl.

Our secrets to the king. Let each consult
 His safety and conspire with me to-day.
 If I send none to watch our enemies
 Regard my days as done, my soldiers slain."

He spake and took new order: mark and muse.
 He scattered horsemen through the realm lest letters,
 Sent by the king, should reach the Írániáns,
 And they should arm themselves to fight for him,
 And so it was that till a time had gone
 A royal letter was perused by none.

§ 25

*How Bahrám Chúbína made known to the Chiefs his
 Designs upon the Throne, and how his Sister
 Gurdyá advised him*

Bahrám Chúbína summoned then the chiefs,
 And told them many secrets. There were present
 Hamdán Gashasp and the archscribe, Yalán-sína,
 Renowned and strong, with valorous Bahrám,
 The son of Siyáwush, and that wise chief,
 Kandá Gashasp. With these he held debate,
 For they were Lions and men of war, and then
 Harangued that fierce host, which was all astray,
 Thus: "Famous chiefs whose counsel all require!
 The Sháh is wroth with us without a cause,
 And so hath turned away from what is right.
 What will ye do? What is the remedy?
 'Tis useless to shed tears upon the past.
 Whoe'er hath hid his anguish from the leech
 Hath showered from his lashes tears of blood,
 And trifles grow in moment when we keep
 Our secrets from the men of understanding.

I have myself my privy griefs and I
 Will tell them to the sages of the world.
 Ye all are conversant with these affairs,
 And so can testify to what I say.
 We left Írán by order of the Sháh
 With but few troops, though eager to engage,
 And none, though long his life, will see a foe
 More numerous. Now if the Turk Parmúda,
 Had, with king Sáwa, marched upon Írán
 It would not have been worth a piece of wax,
 And later they would have attempted Rúm ;
 C. 1852 But on Parmúda and king Sáwa came
 A marvel such as none within the world
 Had seen, and though we bare much toil ourselves
 We left them neither elephants nor treasure.
 The Sháh hath laid up wealth anew, grown rich,
 And yet he is enraged against the host
 Though all the business hath been done for him,
 And he is franchised through no toil of his !¹
 In such a coil what shift shall I employ
 To set my head at ease ? Do ye too all
 Shift for yourselves. What is your remedy
 For such a wound ? I have discharged my heart,
 And freed my soul. Respecting weal or woe
 If ye are ware of any means now speak.”

He proved with these words, for he feared, the host.
 Behind his curtains that famed paladin
 Possessed a sister, one of ardent soul,
 And that wise lady’s name was Gurdya,
 Of fairy-visage and his heart’s delight.
 Now she, on hearing from behind the veil
 Her brother’s words, was angered ; her heart flared.
 With much to say and full of instances
 She came forth to that conclave, and her brother
 Kept silence, when he heard her voice, from word

¹ Couplet transposed.

And answer, and the Íránians too were silent
 For fear of harm. Thus Gurdya addressed
 The troops : “ Illustrious men who seek for guidance !
 Why do ye hold your peace and check your spleen ?
 Ye are the warrior-chieftains of Írán,
 Wise, prescient lords. What see ye in this matter ?
 What game play ye upon this scene of blood ? ”

Then said Ízid Gashasp, the cavalier :—

“ Memorial of the mighty ! were our tongues
 Sharp swords they would take flight before the sea
 Of thine advice. Thine acts are all of God,
 Brave, learned, and wise. We need not fight like
 pards

With all the world. Let no one seek my counsel
 Henceforth because my lore hath reached its bound.
 If ye will fight I too will bear a hand,
 And cavalierly counter cavaliers,
 While if the paladin is pleased with me
 Methinketh that I shall be young for ever.”

Bahrám Chúbína, hearing him thus speak,
 Saw that he dealt with both sides. Then he marked
 Yalán-sína and said : “ What thinkest thou ? ”

Quoth he : “ Brave chief ! the walker in God’s way
 Will be wise, famed, and learned, will have his will
 In all and, winning victory and Grace,
 Will haste not to do ill for that would turn
 A blessing to a curse and circling heaven
 Be vengeful towards him. God hath given thee
 Grace, fortune, troops withal, wealth, prowess, throne ;
 If thou art grateful He will send thee more,
 But through ingratititude the heart will ache.”

Then said Bahrám Chúbína to Bahrám :—
 “ Wise friend and prudent mate ! what sayest thou
 About this seeking after throne and treasure ?
 Will majesty result or pain and grief ? ”

He laughed that such a case should be discussed,

C. 1853

Then tossing up his finger-ring replied :—
 “ As long as this remaineth in the air
 So long shall it be servant to the Sháh ;
 Yet he is great ; despise him not for none
 Should under-estimate the diadem.”

Said to Kandá Gashasp¹ Bahrám Chúbína :—
 “ O thou sword-wielding and steed-spurring Lion !
 What seest and sayst thou touching this affair
 Of ours ? Do we deserve the royal throne ? ”

That cavalier replied : “ O thou that art
 The memory of heroes in the world !
 There was an archimage at Rai who said :—
 ‘ The wise and lucky man to whom ’tis given
 Once to be king his soul will soar to heaven.’
 So aiming at the treasure of the king
 Is better than to be long years a slave.”

Then to the archscribe said Bahrám Chúbína :—
 “ Old wolf ! unclose thy lips.”

The archscribe kept
 His lips still shut awhile and sat amid
 A crowd of thoughts, then said : “ Whoe’er shall seek
 His wish in fitting fashion will attain it,
 For time’s stretched hand is long. Know that no
 pains
 Can shun whatever God will have to be.”

Then said the chieftain to Hamdán Gashasp :—
 “ O thou well versed in fortune’s rise and fall !
 Whatever thou shalt utter in our presence
 Shall be as wind and, like wind, hurt thee not.
 Advise us in this case, this test of good
 And evil fortune.”

Great Hamdán Gashasp
 Thus spake : “ Prized by the great ! why dost thou
 dread
 Ills not yet come and question of the crown

¹ Reading with P. C. has Izid Gashasp.

Of kingship ? Act and leave the rest to God.
 Why reach out for the date if thou dost fear
 The thorn ? A people's Head hath never rest ;
 His mind is fearful and his body weary."

C. 1854

The sister of the captain of the host
 Writhed at their words and grew o'ercast of soul,
 Yet spake she naught in this debate from eve
 Till midnight. Then Bahrám Chúbína said :—
 " What thinkest thou of this assembly's words,
 Fair lady ? "

Gurdyá made no reply ;
 The counsels of the chief displeased her.
 Thereafter she addressed the archscribe thus :—
 " O man maleficent like some old wolf !
 So thou conceivest that the crown and throne,
 Host and addition and the might of fortune
 Were in the world no objects of desire
 To any famous chiefs of generous bent
 Though kingship easier is than servitude !
 Such sentiments as thine demand our tears.
 Take we the precedents of former Sháhs,
 And hear the sayings of those greater ones."

The archscribe made response : " If rede of mine
 Obtain not with thee speak and do whatever
 Thou art advised and follow thy heart's lead."

Then likewise to self-willed Bahrám Chúbína
 His sister spake and said : " They are not good,
 Thy knowledge and thy counsel, and thy steps
 Are tending toward deceit. Full many a time
 Hath the Sháh's throne been void and yet no chief
 Cast any look upon it. It was theirs
 To guard the world by valour, not to have
 An eye upon the throne. They did not aim
 Thereat but girt their loins to serve. They sought
 Their sovereigns' weal and rendered hearty service.
 They were no strangers to the throne and crown,

But worthy of their greatness by descent.
 I speak first of the case of Sháh Káús,¹
 Who would have searched the mysteries of God,
 Have summed the stars and trod heaven's circling
 dome,
 But fell despised and wretched at Sarí
 Through his perverseness and ill bent, and yet
 Gúdarz and Rustam, who was paladin,
 Did not take dudgeon, and thereafter when
 Káús went to Hámávarán,² and folk
 Bound him in heavy fetters, none essayed
 The throne but manifested warm regret.
 So when the Írániāns said to Rustam : ' Thou
 Art worthy of the throne,'³ he cried against
 The speaker : ' Be thy mate the narrow charnel !
 Shall I be on the throne of gold, the Sháh
 Bound ? Perish kingship rather ! Perish crown !'
 C. 1855
 He chose out of Írán twelve thousand men,⁴
 World-taking cavaliers on barded steeds,
 And freed Káús and Gív, Gúdarz and Tús,
 From that captivity. Then when Pírúz
 Was slain and for the Írániāns all was lost,⁵
 While Khúshnawáz emboldened by affairs
 Was seated on the alluring throne in peace,
 Came Súfarai, the scion of Káran,
 In order to restore the throne of power.
 When his success was manifest the nobles
 Went from Írán to hail him as their Sháh,
 And make a subject monarch of the earth.
 He told them : ' 'Tis unseemly. Majesty
 And crown are for the Sháh. Although Kubád
 Is little he will grow ; we may not put
 The wolf within the lion's wood. To make

¹ See Vol. ii. p. 102 *seq.*

² *Id.* p. 82 *seq.*

³ *Cf.* p. 104 and *note.*

⁴ *Cf. Id.* p. 143.

⁵ See Vol. vii, p. 167 *seq.*

A Sháh without blood royal is to give
 His kindred to the winds.' Now when Kubád
 Reached manhood he perceived that Súfarai
 Deserved the crown and, led by miscreants' words,
 Slew him who was the backbone of the state.
 The folk thereafter put Kubád in fetters,
 That horseman bold, that hero of the race
 Of kings, and gave him to Zarmihr, the low-born,
 That he might take revenge for his own sire.
 Zarmihr saw none else worthy of the crown
 And throne of kingship, so he freed Kubád
 In order that he might assert his claim
 Without delay. No subject dared aspire
 Though many were entitled by their birth.
 When from the Turks one hight ' King Sáwa ' came
 To seek the seal and crown the glorious Maker
 Ordained that he should perish in Frán.
 Since by God's Grace and by thy hand so great
 An action was by thine own thumbstall wrought
 Thou wouldest have the empire ! Know that thou
 Wilt lose thy life. Yalán-sína curvetteth,
 Exclaiming : ' I will set up a new king—
 Bahrám Chúbína, offspring of Gashasp—
 And make my name remembered.' Núshírwán,
 The understanding Sháh, found in old age
 His lost youth in Hurmuzd whom all the magnates
 Of this our realm support. Support, say I ?
 Are all his bondslaves and his underlings.
 He hath three hundred thousand cavaliers,
 All paladins, all famed, and all his slaves,
 Obedient to his will, yet chose he thee
 By virtue of his high prerogative,
 Ennobled all thine ancestors and granted
 Revenge upon their foes. Wilt thou repay
 His good with ill ? Know 'twill recoil on thee.
 Design not evil, brother ! It will bring

C. 1856

Ill on thine own head. Make not greed the lord
 O'er wisdom else the sages will not call thee
 A man of piety. Although a woman,
 Far younger than my brother, yet I give
 A man's advice. Oh ! fling not to the wind
 Thy fathers' deeds and mayst thou not recall
 My words to mind."

The assembly marvelled at her,
 The chieftain bit his lips as well aware
 That what she said was just and that she sought
 The path of right. Yalán-sína replied :—
 " O noble lady ! in this company
 Forbear to treat of Sháhs because Hurmuzd
 Will soon pass and the paladin enjoy
 The throne of majesty. Now since the Sháh
 Is what he is in prowess count thy brother
 Already as the monarch of Írán,
 And if Hurmuzd affect¹ the royal crown
 Why sendeth he a distaff as a gift ?
 The paladin is such a lion-man
 That at the terror of his sword earth quaketh,
 And had his sword remained undrawn Hurmuzd,
 Írán and Shám had perished, and to send him
 The present of a distaff and of cotton !
 Fie on a king so faithless ! Talk no more
 About Turk-born Hurmuzd. May all that race
 No longer be ! To count from Kai Kubád
 This stock hath had the crown and throne of
 gold
 A thousand years. Now it is at an end,
 So name them not or give Khusrau Parwíz
 A thought ; his mention is not worth a mite,
 And those that are the princes at his court
 Will be thy brother's subjects who will place
 At his word their lord's feet in heavy bonds."

¹ Reading with P.

“ The Black Dív spreadeth out,” said Gurdya
 A net upon thy path. Destroy us¹ not,
 Both soul and body. I perceive in thee
 But wind and vapouring. Our sire was march-
 lord

At Rai and thou wouldest have us seek the throne.
 Now thine incitement of Bahrám Chúbína,
 And putting into tumult all our kindred,
 Will give our race’s travail to the wind,
 And through thy words, thou base-born underling !
 Yea ! lead him on and fill our quiet times
 With turbulence ! ”

She spake and then withdrew
 In tears with heart grown alien from her brother,
 While all those present said : “ This saintly lady,
 Our eloquent, clear-minded counsellor,
 Hath spoken, thou wouldest say, just like a book,
 And is in wisdom greater than Jámásp.”

Howbeit the thing displeased Bahrám Chúbína,
 Who was in dudgeon at his sister’s words,
 And through long musing his distempered heart
 Showed him the throne of kingship in his dreams.
 He said : “ By toil alone aspirants win
 This fleeting world.”

He bade to spread the board,
 And call for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
 He told the minstrels : “ Let your song to-day
 Be of heroic deeds. I will not hear
 Aught but the story of the Seven Stages ;
 So while we revel sing the part wherein
 Asfandiyár went to the Brazen Hold,
 And of the game he played in that campaign.”²

They drank much wine to him and cried : “ May
 Rai
 Be prosperous since such a chief as thou

¹ *Id.*

² See Vol. v. p. 143.

C. 1857

Ariseth thence, and may God fashion more
Like thee."

At night they went their several ways ;
The heads of all those topers were a-daze.

§ 26

*Bahrám Chúbína's Letter to the Khán and how he coined
Money with the Name of Khusrau Parwíz and
sent it to Hurmuzd*

Whenas the rising sun shot forth its beams,
And darksome night turned sickly at the glow,
The chief Bahrám Chúbína, that bold Wolf,
Bade the archscribe attend. They wrote the Khán
A letter that was worthy of the Artang,¹
Perfumed², illuminate and illustrate :—
“ For grief, while asking pardon for mine acts,
My heart is full of sighing and remorse.
Henceforth I will not hurt thy country, land,
Or marches through regard for thee ; and I,
If I become the monarch of the world,
Will be to thee as 'twere a younger brother.
Wash vengeance from thy heart and thou shalt know
No difference between Írán and Chín.
Take not to heart the past for God forgiveth
His slave. A thousand blessings on thy helm,
Upon thy sword and thy world-conquering hand.”

He spake much to the same effect. The envoy
Was in amaze at him, then trod earth's face,
And bore the message to the Khán of Chín
By whom a gracious answer was returned :—
“ I for my part term thee magnanimous.”

¹ See Vol. ii. p. 19 and note.

² Reading with P.

He sent Bahrám Chúbína gifts that cheered
The heart.

This matter done, Bahrám Chúbína
Formed other plans, unlocked his hoarded treasures,
Gave his troops drachms, steeds, slaves, and privily
Aimed at the seat of sovereignty. He chose
Among the host a paladin, one fit
To be the prince of Khurásán, bestowed
That land on him with Nishápúr and Balkh,
Marv and Harát, and troops withal, then went,
From Balkh to Rai, full of solicitude,
Upon the glorious Khurdád of Dai ;
Took thought of great and small, then bade his men
Set up a mint and issue coins that bore
The superscription of Khusrau Parwíz.
He gave to merchants shrewd and plausible
Of speech, and fitted for the ticklish task,
Sacks of these new-coined drachms and said : “ Buy
up
Whatever ye can get in Taisafún
Of costly Rúm brocade with silken figures
Upon a ground of gold.”

He meant to bring
That coinage to the notice of the king.

§ 27

*How Bahrám Chúbína wrote to Hurmuzd and how
Khusrau Parwiz fled from his Father*

Bahrám Chúbína chose a prudent envoy,
Strong as the blest Surúsh.¹ He wrote withal
A blustering letter and discoursed at large

¹ The previous section ends here in the original.

About Parmúda and king Sáwa's host,
 How he and his own troops had fought, the gift
 That had been given to him by the Sháh—
 That woman's coif and that black distaff-case—
 Then said thus : “ Thou wilt never more behold
 me

E'en in a dream so draw thy fish-hook up.¹
 While thine illustrious, high-fortuned son,
 Khusrau Parwíz, is seated on the throne
 At his command will I make mountains plains,
 And deserts like Jíhún with foemen's blood.
 Young though he be still he is fit to rule,
 And faithful, not a faithless one like thee.
 I have accepted him as king of kings,
 And will henceforth be man to none beside.”

His wish was that the king should put to death
 The son though innocent² because he feared
 Khusrau Parwíz, a young and charming prince.³

C. 1859

The fortune-favoured envoy reached Baghdád
 With men of name from Rai. Hurmuzd grew pale
 As fenugreek when he received the letter.
 Anon accounts of that new coinage reached him,
 Which added grief to grief. He writhed, suspected
 His son, and spake thus to Áyín Gashasp :—
 “ Khusrau Parwíz hath grown so bold that he
 Fain would revolt ; moreover he hath struck
 A brand-new coinage ! Could he hold me cheaper ? ”

Áyín Gashasp replied : “ Be course and charger
 Ne'er seen without thee. Though Khusrau Parwíz
 Is thine own son he should be bound for this.”

Hurmuzd made answer : “ Presently will I
 Remove this upstart.”

That ambitious lord

¹ “ Jamais, même en rêve, tu ne me verras porter sous le bras
 du linge sortant de l'eau.” Mohl.

² Couplet omitted.

³ Five couplets omitted.

Thus answered him : " May none prevail without thee."

They called one privily by night and set him
Before the Sháh who said : " Perform my bidding,
And rid earth's surface of Khusrau Parwíz."

He said : " I will, and charm love from my
heart,
So let the Sháh assign me from his store
Bane, and some dark night when Khusrau Parwíz
Is drunken I will drug his wine. This way
Is better than to shed his blood."

The son,

Unwitting that his ruin was proposed,¹
Sat in his palace gloriously, intent
On charming Idols and on pleasant wine,
And ignorant of all. A chamberlain
Heard of the plot, banned appetite and sleep,
Sped to Khusrau Parwíz and made all clear.
He, hearing that the monarch of the world
Was plotting secretly to slay him, fared
From Taisafún by night, and thou hadst said :—
" He vanished from the world." He did not give
His priceless head away but reached apace
Ázar Ábádagán. When tidings came
To all the chiefs—the marchlords of that province :—
" Khusrau Parwíz, aggrieved against the king,
Hath fled with some few cavaliers," those mag-
nates
Sought for the traces of that well loved prince ;²
All went, both troops and chiefs, to make him
Sháh.
They said : " O prince ! crown, throne, and helm
befit thee,
And from Írán and desert of the spearmen
As many of the swordsmen and brave leaders,

C. 1860

¹ Reading with P.

² Three couplets omitted.

As thou mayst wish, will come to thee. Thy Grace

Will lead the army on. Fear no disaster,
But live great, glad, and well beloved.¹ Although
Three hundred thousand horsemen of Irán
Shall mount the saddle to discomfit thee
We all will give our bodies to be slain
For thy sake and will honour those that fall."

He said : " I fear the Sháh and folk, ye chiefs !
Unless ye come before Ázargashasp,
And take great oaths to assure me that henceforth
Ye will be loyal to me ; then will I
Abide here in all confidence and fear
Not Áhri man."

The warriors, when they heard
His words, all set forth for Ázargashasp.
They took the oath that he desired, protesting :—
" We hold thy love as precious as our eyes."

Assured about the chiefs he secretly
Sent agents everywhere to learn what said
His father of his flight and purposed next.

The Sháh, on hearing that Khusrau Parwíz
Had fled, sent hastily to put Bandví
And Gustaham in bondage as suspects ;
Both were the uncles of Khusrau Parwíz
Upon the mother's side and heroes bold.
All others of his kin beside these two
They also haled to ward without to-do.

¹ Two couplets omitted.

§ 28

How Hurmuzd sent Áyín Gashasp with an Army to fight Bahrám Chúbína and how he was slain by his Comrade

Then to Áyín Gashasp thus spake the Sháh :—

“ I lack advice and sorrow is my mate.

Now that my son hath gone how shall we treat
Bahrám Chúbína, that slight, self-willed slave ? ”

Áyín Gashasp sought an expedient
To make his counsel gracious and replied :—
“ Exalted Sháh ! Bahrám Chúbína oft
Hath spoken of me and of all things he
Desireth most my blood for I was first
To vex him privily, and to dispatch me
In fetters to him may prove serviceable.”

The Sháh made answer : “ This is not my work,
But miscreant Áhriaman’s. I will dispatch
A host ; be thou its leader and prevail ;
But send him first one of our counsellors
To learn his purpose. Fortune, if he seeketh
Power, crown, and throne, will turn from him at last,
While if he shall remain a loyal liege
’Twill be the better for him in the end.
Him will I give a portion of the world,
And set upon his head the heroes’ crown.
The world hath scarcely such a warrior,
But, though like Rustam, he is still my thrall.
Inform me of his doings every whit ;
Proceed with diligence ; cut short the way.”

The order given by the prudent Sháh
Áyín Gashasp obeyed.

There was a captive,
And fellow-citizen of his, within

C. 1861

The royal prison, eager for release.
 On hearing that Áyín Gashasp, the horseman,
 Was going to the war he sent to say :—
 “ O battle-loving warrior ! I am
 Thy fellow-citizen and now in prison.
 Thou art acquainted with my quality.
 I, if thou wilt but beg me from the king,
 Will fare with thee on this campaign and risk
 My life before thee when I am released
 From this strait prison-house.”

Áyín Gashasp

Thereat sent to the monarch of the world
 A man in haste to say : “ There is in bonds
 A fellow-citizen of mine in fear
 And peril who will go with me if now
 The Sháh will grant him pardon for my sake.”

C. 1862 The Sháh replied : “ How should this useless wretch
 Fight in the front of thee ? Thou pleadest for
 A murderer, a scamp, and thief ! Dost thou
 Look for reward ? Still I have now no choice
 Though 'twere the greatest of calamities.”

He gave Áyín Gashasp that man compact
 Of ill, that villain, thief, and murderer,
 And then Áyín Gashasp led forth the host,
 And marched like wind as far as Hamadán,
 Where he encamped and asked : “ Is any one
 Skilled in astrology or presages
 Within this noble city ? ”

All replied :—

Our readers of the stars shall come before thee,
 And earn thy praise.”

An old, officious townsman
 Came bustling up and said : “ There is a dame
 Both old and rich here, and thou mightest say :—
 ‘ She is the stars' eye.’ What she saith is so ;
 Her prophecies will surely come to pass.”

Áyín Gashasp, on hearing this, dispatched
 One with a horse for her and when she came
 He asked her how the Sháh fared and of him
 Who led the host, then added : “ Bring thy lips
 Close to mine ear and tell me if my soul
 Will quit my swarthy body in its bed,
 Or wounded by the weapon of a foe ? ”

While thus he spake of secrets to the crone
 With voice so low that none could overhear them
 The man for whom he had obtained release,
 And taken as companion on the journey,
 Approached and, as he passed by that sage dame,
 Looked at the general and went his way.
 The ancient dame inquired : “ What man is that ?
 A blow of his will make one weep for thee.
 Thy dear life lieth in his hand, and may
 He perish, skin and marrow ! ”

At her words

Áyín Gashasp recalled a former presage,
 Which he had heard from readers of the stars
 But had forgotten. Thus it ran : “ Thy fate
 Shall be in thy companion’s hand—a man
 Both mean and poor—who will go far with thee,
 And in return for friendship shed thy blood.”

He gave her presents and dismissed her quickly,
 But could not sleep or eat for care. He wrote
 A letter to the Sháh : “ The man whom I
 Send back should not have been released for he
 Is worse than dragon’s spawn, and so the Sháh
 Informed his slave who lacked the imperial Grace.¹
 When this man cometh bid the ill-disposed²
 Behead him instantly.”

C. 1863

He wrote and set

¹ The divine insight pertaining to lawful kingship.

² The executioner, according to Mohl, but execution sometimes was embittered by being entrusted to the hands of a private enemy.

His seal thereon. When it was dry he called
 His fellow-citizen, much lauded him,
 Bestowing gifts and many hearty blessings,
 Then said : “ Convey this letter unperceived
 And quickly to the monarch of the world.
 Bring his reply to me with all dispatch,
 And see that thou remain not with the king.”

The young man took the letter from the chief ;
 His mind was all surmises at that mission,
 And thus he said : “ I have endured enough
 Of prison, heavy bonds, and want of food ;
 But God delivered me from my distress,
 From grief, affliction, and mine evil fortune ;
 Yet now that I return to Taisafún
 My blood and marrow seethe.”

He journeyed sadly
 Awhile, then broke the letter open, read it,
 And marvelled at the process of the world.
 He said : “ My neighbour begged my life and urged :-
 ‘ The act is worthy of the prince,’ so how
 Should he be now insistent for my blood
 Unless some dream hath moved him to this ill ?
 But now to bloodshed he shall see the way,
 And rest from travail and endeavouring ! ”

He turned back musing, went as swift as wind,
 And on arrival found the chief alone.
 Áyín Gashasp was seated in his tent,
 Without attendant, scimitar, and steed
 Absorbed in thinking on the king and all
 That fortune might inflict upon himself.
 Now when his neighbour came within his tent
 Áyín Gashasp knew that he proposed bloodshed.
 The murderer drew his scimitar ; the chief
 Implored him much and said : “ Deluded one !
 Did not I beg thy lost life from the Sháh ? ”

The other answered : “ Granted. What have I

Done that thou shouldst deal ill with me ? ”

He smote

That noble chief across the neck, determined
His fighting and his feasting, and bore off
His bloody head unnoticed from the tent.
Let him that seeketh honour never be
Alone, in war-time more especially.

The miscreant left the murdered in his blood,¹
Sped to Bahrám Chúbína and exclaimed :—
“ See thy foe’s head—the man’s who sought to harm
thee ! ”

He marched against thee, knowing not thy purpose.”

Bahrám Chúbína asked : “ Who is it ? Who
Will mourn this head ? ”

C. 1864

He said : “ Áyín Gashasp,
The cavalier, who left the court for war.”

Bahrám Chúbína said : “ The man was good,
And he had come from court to reconcile
The Sháh and us, and thou hast ta’en his head
While sleeping ! Now will I requite thee so
That folk shall sore bewail thee.”

He bade set
A gallows at the door in sight of all,
And gibbeted the wretch alive, thus rousing
The hearts of evil-doers. Many horsemen
Brought by Áyín Gashasp from court sought out
Bahrám Chúbína when their chief had perished,
While many others sought Khusrau Parwíz,
And some the Sháh. A flock will stray just so
Un-herded on a day of wind and snow.

¹ Or with Mohl : “ Il sentit que le sang versé le rendait infâme.”

§ 29

*How Hurmuzd grieved, refused Audience to the Iránians,
and was blinded by Bandwí and Gustaham*

When tidings reached the king of that famed hero,
Áyín Gashasp, he shut the gate of audience
For grief ; none saw him too with wine in hand ;
He could not rest or eat or sleep ; his eyes
Were full of tears. At court the talk ran much
Upon the Sháh and his secluded state.
One said : “ Bahrám Chúbína seeketh fight,
Desirous of the throne of majesty.”

Another said : “ Aggrieved against the Sháh
Khusrau Parwíz is marching on Irán.”

Confounded at the case the warriors
Each held a different view, and as the bruit
Arose from Taisafún the monarchy
Lost credit while its servants' heads were full
Of grief and wrath, preferring curse to blessing.
Few troops remained about the gate ; the world
Grew strait to the Sháh's heart.

Then tidings reached
Bandwí and Gustaham : “ The Grace of kingship
Is darkened.”

All the captives loosed their bonds,
And sent forth one to ascertain and learn
What warriors' kept the portal of the Sháh,
And having learned rebelled, threw off restraint,
And broke from ward ; shouts rose that shook the
plain ;
The garrison were left remediless.
Appeared Bandwí and Gustaham in mail
With troops in arms. The cavaliers forthwith,

All unabashed, rode hot-foot to the court,¹
 And gallant Gustaham harangued the troops :—
 “ This is no trivial case, for if ye join
 With us ye must ban reverence for the Sháh.
 If ye will all gird up your loins in vengeance
 For those Iránian chiefs, because Hurmuzd
 Hath turned upon the innocent, henceforth
 Hail him not, Sháh ; we will requite his deed,
 And turn for him the waters of Irán
 To colocynth. We will direct your course,
 And set a new Sháh on his throne. If ye
 Show weakness we will leave Irán to you :
 A corner of the world will do for us,
 And thither with our comrades will we go.”

The whole throng at the words of Gustaham
 Began to curse the Sháh’s peace and exclaimed :—
 “ Down with a king that sheddeth his son’s blood ! ”

The troops thus heartened fired the palace-gate,
 Made entry of the imperial hall, and reached
 The presence of the Sháh, that man of Grace.
 When they had ta’en his crown and flung him head-
 long

Down from his throne they set upon his eyes
 The searing irons, and the radiant Lamps
 Were darkened. Then they suffered him to live,
 And gave his treasure shamefully to spoil.

Such are the doings of the exalted sky !
 Affect not thou this Wayside Hostelry,
 Wherefrom we have our whiles of wealth and woe,
 And in the end must quit them both and go.
 The hundredth and the hundred thousandth year
 As soon as they are numbered disappear.
 The man by whom good fortune would be won
 Must speak no evil and must list to none.²

¹ Couplet omitted.

² In C. and P. the reign ends here.

§ 30

How Khusrau Parwiz heard of the Blinding of Hurmuzd

C. 1866 Then Gustaham sent to Ázargashasp
 One with two roadsters to Khusrau Parwíz
 In haste by night with tidings from Írán.
 The messenger approached the youthful Sháh
 (The moon was one night old) and told what he
 Had heard of or had seen in that revolt.
 The young prince paled like flower of fenugreek,
 And cried : “ Whoever quitteth wisdom’s ways,
 Obeying impulse through his lack of knowledge,
 And fearless of the process of high heaven,
 His life will profit not. If I found pleasure
 In this thy tale of ill my food and sleep
 Would turn to fire, but though, what time my father
 Set hand to blood, I could no longer dwell
 Within Írán yet I am still his slave,
 And hearken to his words.”

All seared at heart

He marched his host as swift as fire for fear
 Lest that world-winner, great Bahrám Chúbína,
 Should get the start of him, and so he led
 His men from Barda’ and from Ardabil,
 Troop after troop, while from Armenia
 A power sped with the Sháh’s son swift as wind.
 As soon as tidings of him reached Baghdád :—
 “ The claimant of the throne of might hath come,”
 The folk were all contented, and thereby
 The atheling accomplished his desire.
 The great men of the city—those that shared
 The general joy—went out to welcome him,
 Then going to the dwelling of the Sháh
 Discoursed at large, and he approved their words.

They set an ivory throne upon the dais
With golden torque and with a sumptuous crown
That many a Sháh had worn : it had beheld
No lack upon the state. *Khusrau Parwíz*
Made entry of the city mournfully,
And visited his father with a sigh.¹

¹ There is no break here in the original.

XLIII

KHUSRAU PARWÍZ

HE REIGNED THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS

ARGUMENT

The deposition of Hurmuzd leaves Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína rivals for the throne. After abortive negotiations Khusrau Parwíz is compelled to flee to Rúm and Hurmuzd is put to death. On the way to Rúm Khusrau Parwíz is saved from capture by the devotion of his maternal uncle Bandwí. Bahrám Chúbína assumes the crown and frustrates a plot against himself. Khusrau Parwíz is well received in Rúm, is given Cæsar's daughter in marriage, and returns to Írán with a Rúman army. He is joined by Bandwí and others. After a severe struggle Bahrám Chúbína is forced to take refuge with the Khán of Chín in whose service he greatly distinguishes himself but as he is preparing to invade Irán his death is compassed by Kharrád, son of Barzín, at the instigation of Khusrau Parwíz. The Khán avenges Bahrám Chúbína whose sister, Gurdya, he asks in marriage. Gurdya escapes with her brother's partisans to Írán. Khusrau Parwíz to avenge his father puts to death Bandwí whose brother Gustaham rebels and marries Gurdya. She murders her husband at the instigation of Khusrau Parwíz who marries her himself and accords pardon to her adherents. He treats the city of Rai harshly but relents at her request. He organizes the realm. Maryam, Cæsar's daughter, gives birth to Shírwí (Kubád) on which occasion Cæsar asks for the return of the True Cross but is refused. The poet then tells of the case of the fair Shírín, who murders Maryam, and that of Bárbad, the minstrel, and of the greatness of Khusráu Parwíz. Shírwí is imprisoned, but the troops at length revolt and release him. Khusrau Parwíz is dethroned and put in ward.

NOTE

Khusrau Parwíz (Chosroes II, A.D. 590–628) was contemporary with three Eastern Roman Emperors—Maurice (A.D. 582–602), Phocas (A.D. 602–610), and Heraclius (A.D. 610–642). The word “Parwíz” seems to be a variant of the Persian word “Pírúz” which means “victorious.” Certainly Khusrau Parwíz did more to justify such a title than any Sháh since the days of Darius Hystaspis. Egypt and the whole of the Roman possessions in Asia fell into his hands, and Persian troops were encamped within a mile of Constantinople. The genius of Heraclius, however, at length turned the tide. On all these great events the Sháhnáma is silent and the bulk of the material of the reign is made up from the Romance of Bahrám Chúbína¹ which leaves his sister, Gurdyá, firmly established in the favour of Khusrau Parwíz though with Shírín in the neighbourhood it seems doubtful whether she would be allowed to retain her position long.² The reign is the last great one of the poem and towards the end of it “bad begins, and worse remains behind.”

§ 4. Tabarí also states that the meeting between Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína took place on the Nahrawán.³

§ 5. The proverb is in the Persian Tabarí but is spoken by Khusrau Parwíz when about to combat with three Turks.⁴ See below.

§§ 6–7. In the Persian Tabarí the three Turks are encountered by Khusrau Parwíz after his return from Rúm,⁵ not as here and in Tabari.⁶

§ 8. “Thou shalt not kill, but need’st not strive
Officially to keep alive.”

probably about represents the share of responsibility that Khusrau Parwíz had in his father’s murder. Bandwí and Gustaham were his maternal uncles.

§ 9. According to the Persian Tabarí Bahrám, the son of Siyáwush, had married Bahrám Chúbína’s niece.⁷

Firdausi’s description of Khusrau Parwíz’ place of refuge is somewhat grandiloquent. It appears to have been a hermitage⁸ or monastery.⁹

§§ 12. For the wife of Bahrám, son of Siyáwush, see above.

¹ See p. 72.

² Cf. pp. 364, 389.

³ NT, pp. 274, 278.

⁴ ZT, ii. 292.

⁵ Id. p. 291.

⁶ NT, pp. 274, 280.

⁷ ZT, ii. 283.

⁸ Id. 280.

⁹ NT, p. 281.

Mausil, prince of Músh, was a member of the Mamigonian family, celebrated in Armenian history.¹

§ 13. Khusrau Parwiz, on quitting Ctesiphon in his flight, crossed the Euphrates and went to Ambar, thence followed the course of the stream and recrossing it reached the Roman frontier-station of Circesium. Subsequently at the invitation of the Emperor Maurice he took up his residence at Hierapolis.²

According to the Persian Tabari the Arab was Ijás, son of Kabisa. He was one of the chiefs of the Baní Tayy tribe³ famous for its hospitality. He was made governor of Híra by Khusrau Parwiz after the execution of Nu'mán, the last prince of the dynasty, and commanded the Persians at the battle of Dhú Kár.⁴ The Persian Tabari omits the meeting with the merchant.

Kársán looks like a Persian form of Circesium but is a shortened form of Káristán, a busy place. The miracle is not in the Persian Tabari.

Warigh, as appears from the account in the Persian Tabari, was Rakka (Nicephorium, Callinicus) now in ruins. Some miles to the south-west of it lay the city of Reseph or Rasafa, also now in ruins, in which was the shrine of the celebrated Saint Sergius who with his consort Saint Bacchus suffered martyrdom under Maximian. The town was in consequence known as Sergiopolis. Either from a genuine but temporary impulse or from policy Khusrau Parwiz during his exile in Rúm much affected Christianity, adopted Sergius as his patron Saint and after recovering his throne still continued to send gifts to, and ask favours of, that shrine. Tabari makes Sergius the leader of the Roman army that effected the restoration of Khusrau Parwiz.⁵ In the Sháhnáma the hermit=Sergius.

§ 17. The terms on which the Emperor Maurice agreed to help Khusrau Parwiz included the cession of Dárá, Martyropolis, and perhaps Nisibis.⁶ Western authorities are silent about the marriage of the Emperor's daughter Maryam to Khusrau Parwiz, but Nöldeke points out that Shírwi's pre-eminence at the Persian court is best explained by the assump-

¹ *Id.* 285, RSM, 319. ² NT, p. 282 *note*, RSM, p. 480 and *note*.

³ ZT, ii. 286.

⁴ NT, p. 333 *seq.* ZT, ii. pp. 286, 318 *seq.*

⁵ ZT, ii. 288.

For Dhú Kár see p. 190.

⁶ See NT, p. 284 and *note*, ZT, ii. 288, GDF, v, 375 and *note*, RSM, p. 497 and *note*.

⁷ NT, p. 285 *note*, RSM, p. 482 and *note*, GDF, v. 375 and *note*.

tion that his mother was a princess. Shírín, who naturally was antagonistic to him in the interests of her own son, Mar-dánsháh, was unable to prevail against him.¹

§§ 19–20. These are not in the Persian Tabarí.

§ 21. The army lent to Khusrau Parwíz by the Emperor was commanded by Narses, a Persian in the Roman service, an able general who was afterwards cruelly put to death by Phocas.² Niyátús (Theodosius) was the seven years old son, and so described in the Persian Tabarí,³ of Maurice and had already been crowned by the Emperor. He may have accompanied Narses.⁴

§ 23. The mission of Dárá Panáh is not in the Persian Tabarí.

§§ 24–26. Historically the events of the campaign seem to have been briefly as follows:—Khusrau Parwíz with his Roman allies marched to the lesser Zab in order to effect a junction with his native and Armenian supporters with whom were his two uncles and Mausíl. Bahrám Chúbína vainly tried to prevent this. He then offered battle with his back to the Zagros mountains but was compelled to retreat to higher ground where Khusrau Parwíz attacked him against the opinion of Narses, who, however, with his Roman troops saved the situation when Khusrau Parwíz was in imminent danger of disaster. This incident appears as the intervention of Surúsh in the Sháhnáma.⁵ In the meantime a detachment of the allied forces had occupied Seleucia and Ctesiphon. The outcome of the situation was that Bahrám Chúbína retreated through the mountains in his rear to the neighbourhood of Takht-i-Sulaimán in order to maintain his communications with Rai and eastern Irán generally. He was pursued and after a further retirement was defeated decisively and escaped with the remnant of his forces by way of Rai and Dámaghán to the Turks.

§ 27. The Persian Tabarí lays the scene with the carline in the neighbourhood of Hamadán. Thence Bahrám Chúbína proceeds to Rai and Dámaghán. He then defeats a mountain-chief named Káran and takes him prisoner but releases him.⁶

¹ NT, p. 283 *note*, RSM, p. 504 *note*.

² ZT, ii. 291.

³ See p. 299.

⁴ GDF, v. 373 and *note*, 391.

⁵ NT, p. 284 *note*.

⁶ ZT, ii. p. 296 *seq.*

§ 30. According to Sásánian usage Khusrau Parwíz inaugurates his reign by visiting the Fire-temple at Shíz.¹

§ 31. The death of Firdausí's son took place apparently about A.D. 1004.

§ 32. In the Persian Tabarí the name of the chief that domineered over the Khán was Paighú—the word used for the races of the north in Dakíkí's portion of the Sháhnáma.² He was the Khán's brother and claimed to have a better title to the throne.³

§ 34. In the Persian Tabarí it is a bear that carries off the Khán's daughter and Bahrám Chúbína rescues her.⁴

§ 37. In the Persian Tabarí the queen is concerned directly in the murder of Bahrám Chúbína. She is heavily bribed and provides the assassin.⁵ So too in Tabarí.⁶

§ 39. The crafty Kharrád, son of Barzín, as Firdausí calls him, but whose real name was Hurmuzd Garabzín or Galabzín, may be identical with the chief who commanded one of the Persian wings at the battle of Dhú Kár⁷ and was killed,⁸ but according to the Sháhnáma he was alive at the accession of Kubád (Shírwí).

The battle of Dhú Kár, though the forces engaged in it do not appear to have been large, was a very memorable affair. The events that led up to it are given at length in Tabarí. It will be sufficient to say here that a long series of intrigues resulted in the execution of Nu'mán bin Munzír by order of Khusrau Parwíz. This ended the dynasty of the princes of Híra, and Ijás bin Kabísa⁹ was appointed the Persian governor by the Sháh who ordered him to collect and dispatch to the Persian court all Nu'mán's effects. The Arab chief, Háni bin Mas'úd, who had been entrusted with them refused to give them up. Khusrau Parwíz instructed Ijás to enforce compliance, and the battle of Dhú Kár, in which the Persians were overthrown, followed. Where Dhú Kár was is not clear but it was not far from the Euphrates and Kúfa, and had an all the year round water-supply which made it a great resort of the Arab tribes in the summer at which season the battle was fought. The Arabs celebrated their victory with songs of triumph, and its results and those of the Persian policy that

¹ Vol. i. p. 60.

² Vol. v. p. 21 and *note*.

³ ZT, ii. 302.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* 303.

⁶ NT, p. 289.

⁷ See below.

⁸ NT, pp. 289 and *note*, 335 *note*, 338, 341, 342.

⁹ Cf. p. 188.

led up to it were very important. The destruction of the dynasty of the princes of Híra, which had formed a buffer-state between the Persians and the Arabs, was a political blunder. The defeat was a display of weakness on the part of the Persians in a region at no great distance from their own capital. It gave the Arabs independence, encouraged them to make raids into Persian territory, and was a glorious and stimulating memory with which tradition soon associated Muhammad himself when the time came for the great Arab invasion of Irán. For these reasons the battle called for some notice here although there is no mention of it in the Sháhnáma. It was fought some time between A.D. 604–610.¹

§§ 40–42. According to Tabarí the Khán wished to marry Gurdyá to his brother who pursues and is killed by her.²

§§ 44–47. On these see NT, p. 478 *seq.* The story of the revolt of Gustaham seems only to be known from various versions of the Romance of Bahram Chúbína. Bandwí appears to have been killed early in the reign about the year A.D. 591. Gustaham rebelled shortly afterwards and held out till about A.D. 595.

§ 52. Shírwí seems to have been Khusrau Parwíz' eldest son but who his real mother was is unknown.³ His troubles with his father sprang from Shírín's ambition on behalf of her own son, Mardánsháh.⁴

§§ 53–54. According to the Sháhnáma the Cross had been long indeed in the possession of the Persians. Here the carrying off is attributed to Ardshír not Dáráb.⁵ Historically they took it when they captured Jerusalem in A.D. 614.⁶ It was given back as one of the terms of peace between Heraclius and Kubád (Shírwí) in A.D. 628.

The statement that Jesus laughed upon the Cross is a corollary from the notion, common among the Gnostics, that he was not really crucified but some one in his stead. The more accurate form of the statement would be that quoted in Photius from a work called “The Journeys (or Circuits) of the Apostles” (*Ἀποστόλων Περιόδοι*) *viz.* that Christ was not crucified but another in his place, and that therefore he laughed at the crucifiers (*Τὸν Χριστὸν μὴ σταυρωθῆναι ἀλλ' ἔτερον ἀντὸν, καὶ καταχελῆν διὰ τὸντο τῶν σταυρούνταν*).⁷ Muhammad in the Kurán

¹ See for the above generally NT, p. 310 *seq.* and *notes*, ZT, ii. 309 *seq.*

² NT, p. 289.

³ Cf. p. 188.

⁴ NT, p. 357, *note*.

⁵ Vol. v. p. 306, and *note*.

⁶ NT, p. 291 *note*.

⁷ BPB, cod. 114.

adopted this view which of course became the belief of his followers:—"They slew him not and they crucified him not, but they had only his likeness."¹

§ 56. Shírín has been described by different authorities as of Roman, Greek, Armenian, and Persian descent. She has been identified also with Maryam, the problematical wife of Khusrau Parwíz—a view that receives no support from the Sháhnáma. There is a general agreement that she was a Christian.² According to the Sháhnáma the association of Khusrau Parwíz with Shírín began during his father's lifetime. This is affirmed also in some accounts quoted by Mír Khánd according to which Shírín was in the service of a Persian noble at whose house Khusrau Parwíz in his youth occasionally visited. There he saw Shírín, fell in love with her, and gave her a ring. The noble got to know of what was going on and ordered a servant to drown her. She saved herself, however, with the servant's connivance and took refuge with a hermit. After Khusrau Parwíz became Sháh she got the ring conveyed to him, and he carried her off to Madá'in in great state.³ If Shírín really managed to retain her influence over Khusrau Parwíz for the best part of a lifetime she must have been possessed of a very exceptional personality. The devotion to her of her lover, Farhád, is celebrated in Nizámi's poem of "Khusrau and Shírín" (A.D. 1180). Farhád, famous for his architectural and engineering skill, seems to be an historical character. To him with some probability may be attributed the responsibility for Khusrau Parwíz' triumphal arch at Takht-i-Bústán⁴ near Kirmánsáh and his palace at Mashítá (Mashetta) some twenty-five miles due east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. The date of the construction of this palace, of which the exquisitely carved stone façade is now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum at Berlin, however, is still disputed.⁵ Farhád is not mentioned in the Sháhnáma. In the Persian Tabarí Shírín is stated to have been a Greek, to have predeceased Khusrau Parwíz, and to have been loved by Farhád, but it is not said that she was in love with him.⁶ Firdausí does not suggest that she was of other than Persian

¹ RK, p. 551 and *note*. Cf. SK, i. 62 and *notes*, 116 and *notes*.

² Cf. p. 195. ³ RM, Pt. I. Vol. ii. p. 399.

⁴ For an illustration see PCHAP, p. 135.

⁵ A general view of the ruins, as they were, and a detail of the ornamentation, are given in RSM, p. 594 *seq.* ⁶ ZT, ii. 304.

origin, and she is said to have been a native of Khúzistán.¹ Her name is derived from the Persian word for milk "shír" and so comes to mean "sweet."

§ 57. A somewhat similar story is told of the Egyptian Amasis by Herodotus.²

§ 58. The murder of Maryam by Shírín is on the face of it a poetical fiction suggested by the known enmity felt by Shírín with regard to Shírwí who, as a parricide to be, is here represented in an unfavourable light. His imprisonment probably was brought about by Shírín in the interests of her own son Mardánsháh and nearly had the effect desired.³

§ 60. In the Persian Tabarí Sarkash is called Sergius.⁴

§ 61. The palace here referred to must be the Takht-i-Khusrau whose façade and vast hall on the left bank of the Tigris some twenty-five miles below Baghdád form the finest remains of Sásánian architecture. The palace, however, seems to have been built not in the days of Khusrau Parwíz but in those of his grandfather Núshírwán and, as Firdausí states, a Rúman architect may have been employed.⁵ Khusrau Parwíz from about the time of the outbreak of the Roman war (A.D. 603), after the murder of the Emperor Maurice by Phocas till nearly the end of his reign, held his court at Dastagird not at Ctesiphon.⁶

§§ 63–65. The reign of Khusrau Parwíz bears a considerable resemblance to that of Assurbanipal (B.C. 668–626). Their seats of government were on the same historic stream—Dastagird and Madá'in in the former case, Nineveh and Chalah in the latter. Both reigns were long and the last great ones of their respective dynasties. The wars of both monarchs covered much the same ground—Syria, Armenia, Asia Minor and Egypt. In both cases a season of military brilliancy and territorial expansion was followed by one of cumulative disaster. In both cases the national resources were over-strained and in both cases the subsequent collapse came with startling suddenness.

The account given by Firdausí of the causes that led to the fall of Khusrau Parwíz and of the fall itself may be amplified from other authorities thus:—In A.D. 626 the Sásánian Empire, though it had suffered shrewd blows in the previous

¹ NT, p. 283 *note*. ² RH, Bk. ii, ch. 172. ³ p. 196. ⁴ ZT, ii. 305.

⁵ For an illustration of the ruins see RSM, frontispiece.

⁶ See p. 194.

campaigns of Heraclius, was still after nearly a quarter of a century of warfare far from being worsted. It was not Khusrau Parwíz but Heraclius that made several vain attempts to bring about peace. The Persian army under Shahrbaráz (the Guráz of Firdausí) still occupied Chalcedon, divided only by a mile, but an impassable mile, of sea from Constantinople. The Persians had good cause to deplore their lack of sea-power. To get over this difficulty they made arrangements for a mixed horde of Avars, Slavs, and other tribes, who had no straits to cross, to attack Constantinople. That city was besieged accordingly but proved impregnable to the resources of the barbarians. Heraclius, meanwhile, contented himself with operations in Lazica but his brother, Theodore, worsted the Persians in Asia Minor. In this connexion we have an instance of the way in which Khusrau Parwíz treated his unsuccessful generals. The defeat of the Persians on the occasion in question seems largely to have been due to the effects of a severe hail-storm. Khusrau Parwíz, however, was very wroth and when the Persian commander died of despondency shortly afterwards he had the body embalmed and sent to him to be maltreated.¹ In A.D. 627 Heraclius determined on a Winter-campaign against his enemy's capital. He defeated the Persians near Nineveh on December 12th and then marched on Dastagird, some seventy miles above Ctesiphon, where Khusrau Parwíz had held his court for the previous twenty years in consequence, it is said, of a prediction made to him when besieging Dárá in the days of the Emperor Phocas that he would perish on the next occasion that he entered Ctesiphon.² Nevertheless he retreated thither, abandoning Dastagird to its fate, and then crossed the Tigris to Bih-Ardshír (Seleucia), taking with him Shírín, two sons of his by her, and three daughter-wives.³ His eldest son, Shírwí, and his other sons were in internment at 'Akr Bábil, a state-prison near Babylon.⁴ At Bih-Ardshír the Sháh armed his personal attendants *etc.* and sent them to reinforce the defeated Persian army which had made no effective stand since the battle of Nineveh. These combined forces, with two hundred elephants, took up their position on the river Arba, a short distance from Ctesiphon and broke down the bridges.⁵ On January 7th A.D. 628 Heraclius advanced from Dastagird, which he had devastated,

¹ CTC, Vol. i. p. 485.

² NT, p. 356 and *note*.

³ *Id.* pp. 494, 496

⁴ CTC, p. 498.

⁵ *Id.* 496, 499.

and three days later encamped within twelve miles of the Arba. He sent George, the leader of the Armenian contingent, to reconnoitre the Persian position and on his report retreated northwards to the neighbourhood of Lake Urumiah where he passed the rest of the Winter. Shortly before he had made another of his appeals to Khusrau Parwíz for an accommodation : " I follow thee and am instant for peace, for I do not of mine own will consume Persia with fire but because I am forced thereto by thee. Now therefore let us throw down our arms and welcome peace. Let us put out the fire before all is burned." The Sháh refused the offer to the exasperation of his people¹ with whom he was already very unpopular because, according to Tabarí, he despised them and treated their great men without regard, had given the barbarian Farrukhánzád, son of Sumai, power over them, and ordered the execution of the captives, and intended to put to death the Persian troops defeated by Heraclius.² He had also, it seems, sent instructions for the putting to death of the Persian general Shahrbaráz, but the bearer of the letter was taken by the Romans. Heraclius informed Shahrbaráz who falsified the letter by making the order apply to forty other chiefs as well as to himself and read out the dispatch as altered to the assembled Persian leaders. In their wrath they renounced their allegiance to Khusrau Parwíz, made terms of peace with Heraclius, and decided to quit Chalcedon and return home.³ Khusrau Parwíz also had managed to offend his native Christian subjects. In earlier days he had been disposed favourably towards them, and we have seen how he placed himself under the special protection of S. Sergius,⁴ while his wife, Shírín, was a Christian of the Nestorian persuasion. She was, however, lured over to the Monophysites and used her influence against the Nestorians who in consequence were not allowed to choose a Catholicus. A very highly esteemed Nestorian named Yazdín was chief tax-collector. After his death Khusrau Parwíz seized his property and did not bestow by way of compensation the vacant post on Yazdín's son, Shamtá, who also was a Nestorian and afterwards took a prominent part in the revolt against the Sháh. Towards the end of the reign the Monophysites also had cause for complaint against

¹ *Id.*

² NT, p. 356. The prisoners are said to have numbered 36,000.

³ CTC, i. 497. ⁴ p. 188.

Khusrau Parwíz. Generally speaking, too, all Christians must have been horrified at the sack of Jerusalem and the carrying off of the True Cross.¹ There was therefore no lack of discontent throughout the army and nation generally. The retreat of Heraclius, however, at a moment when the state seemed threatened with imminent peril, might have staved off matters for a while had it not been for the question of the succession. It is said that Khusrau Parwíz when he fled from Dastagird to Ctesiphon was suffering from dysentery and wished to secure the crown for his son Mardásas (Mardánsháh), the offspring of Shírín.² Shírwí, the Sháh's eldest son, who was in internment with many of his brothers, was therefore in a situation of imminent peril. A conspiracy was formed to make him Sháh and rescue the captives in the prisons. Among the conspirators were two sons of Shahrbaráz, Shamtá, son of Yazdín, and Mihr Hurmuzd, the son of a former governor of Nímrúz who had fallen a victim to Khusrau Parwíz' jealous suspicions.³ A party of the nobles hastened to 'Akr Bábil and brought Shírwí by night to Bih-Ardshír (Seleucia) where, at the bridge of boats, which it would be important to seize, he was met by others of the conspirators. The prisons were thrown open, and that night Khusrau Parwíz heard the shouts that hailed Shírwí as "Kubád Sháhánsháh." When the rebels approached the palace in the early morning the royal body-guard fled and Khusrau Parwíz escaped into his garden which was called "The Garden of the Indians" but was discovered shortly and taken prisoner. The date, according to our reckoning, was February 25th, A.D. 628.⁴

§ 1

The Prelude

Of heaven's dome revolving rapidly,
And ever restless in its instancy,

What shall I say ? It giveth one a crown,
Another to the fishes in the sea ;

¹ See for the above NT, pp. 357, 383 and *notes*.

² CTC. i. 499.

³ NT, p. 379 and *note*. Nöldeke does not consider the execution of the governor historical.

⁴ *Id.* p. 356.

To one man naked hands and head and feet,
No where to dwell in and no while to eat,

And to another beaver-skin, brocade,
And silk, with milk and honey for his meat.

C. 1867

The end of both, ensnared in bale's dark net,
Is in the dust, and had the sage ne'er set

Eyes on the world, nor passed through days of strife
As lord or liege, his lot were happier yet.

I treat the matter of Khusrau Parwíz,
And proffer to the reader novelties.¹

§ 2

How Khusrau Parwiz sat upon the Throne and made an Oration

Whenas Khusrau Parwíz sat on the throne
Of gold the men of noble birth repaired
To him. They summoned all the chiefs and showered
Gems over that new crown. He thus addressed
The archmages : “ No one save the fortunate
Can win this crown and throne. May mine employ
Be right alone for from injustice cometh
All loss. We purpose well to all. Our head
Is void of evil-doing. This new throne,
And this new fortune bright and opulent,
Are mine from God. Do ye withal incline
Your hearts to obey and covenant with us
To observe three things in all contingencies :
To harm not holy men, not to rebel,

¹ There is no break here in the original.

And to abstain from others' goods forwhy
 The pang will pass to him that did the wrong,
 Whene'er it chanced, and sold his heart for naught.
 Now must your hands be washed from things like
 these,

The path of right ensued. Moreover wisdom
 Approveth what accordeth best to manhood.
 I have no difference with any one
 Although such sought my crown and signet-ring.
 The man of high birth and of noble nature
 Will speak but right. Your safety is assured :
 I will not work the works of Áhriman."

All those that heard the Sháh blessed crown and
 throne,
 And going forth rejoicing praised his fortune,
 While he descended from the throne of might
 Right glad and mused upon Hurmuzd all night.

§ 3

How Khusrau Parwiz visited his Father and asked Forgiveness

C. 1868 Now when the ebon Veil had disappeared,
 And in the distance cock-crow reached the ear,
 The winner of the world with stricken heart,
 And deeply sorrowful, approached his sire,
 On seeing him lamented, did obeisance,
 And tarried long with him. Khusrau Parwíz,
 Beholding his sire's face, sighed deeply, kissed
 His eyes and head and feet, then said to him
 With full heart and with face all wet with tears :—
 “ My father, fortune's mate, thou memory
 Of Núshírwán ! thou know'st that none had pricked

Thy finger had I been but there to help thee.
 See what thou wilt command me ; grief hath come
 Upon thee and my heart is full. If now
 Thou biddest I am at thy gate a slave
 To guard thy head. I seek not crown, I want
 Not host, and lay my head before thy throne.”

Hurmuzd replied : “ O prudent one ! my day
 Of misery will pass from me, and he
 That perpetrated this will soon be gone :
 Both trouble and delight are transient.
 I ask three things of thee, no more, and one
 Is that each morning at the break of day
 Thou wilt delight mine ears with thine own voice ;
 The second is that thou wilt send to me
 Some noble cavalier scarred with long fight
 To talk to me of warfare and the chase,
 And some old sage to hold discourse of kings,
 And bring to me the records to abate
 My pain and misery ; and my third wish
 Is that thy mother’s brothers, who are not
 Thine equals but thy slaves, shall never see
 The world henceforth : discharge thy wrath on them
 For all this grief.”

“ O king ! ” he made reply,
 “ May that man perish who deploreh not
 Thine eyes and be thy foes, though their ill deeds
 Be secret, banished from the world, but still
 Consider in that lucid mind of thine :
 Bahrám Chúbína hath been paladin
 While with him there are countless forces—horsemen
 And gallant sworders—and if we lay hand
 On Gustaham no refuge will be left us ;
 But as regardeth an old scribe to read
 The annals, and some war-primed cavalier,
 Skilled in the feast withal, I will dispatch
 Such ever new to thee. Be no whit sad,

And hold not thou the action Gustaham's ;
 'Tis God's because of senseless words and deeds.
 May thy heart bear this anguish, and may patience
 Consort with wisdom ; but should fortune serve
 I will myself exact complete revenge
 On Gustaham and reprobate Bandwi,
 And give them shroudless to the dogs to eat.
 Be of good cheer, O son of Núshírwán !
 And may thy soul be ever young."

He spake,

And left the presence weeping but reserved.
 The son was kindlier-tempered than the king
 In which regard a man of wisdom said :—
 "A bland youth, sweet-tongued, is a better friend
 Than some fierce warrior ageing to his end,
 Yet at the last dust is the common lot
 Of one of parts and one that hath them not ;
 Albeit to learn of one there is no need,
 Who saith that wits and fools are of one breed,
 For knowledge will ensure thy fair surcease,
 And heaven in Paradise will give thee peace.
 As victuals serve to keep the body whole,
 So knowledge is all needful for the soul.
 Cry to the Holy and Supreme in all,
 And be all undismayed at great or small."

§ 4

*How Bahrám Chúbína heard of the Blinding of Sháh
 Hormuzd and how he led his Troops against
 Khusrau Parwíz*

Bahrám Chúbína heard how fortune dealt
 With that famed king : "They set the searing irons

To his bright eyes, and those two Lamps, those twin
 Narcissi of his garth, are dead, his son
 Is seated on his throne and his high fortune
 Is trodden underfoot."

Bahrám Chúbína,

The hero, was amazed, grew wan, and pondered.
 He said : " The time for me to fight hath come ;
 By daring I will seize the world."

He bade

To bear forth to the field the kettledrums
 And flag of majesty. He packed the baggage,
 He called his warriors to horse and spake
 Of waging war against Khusrau Parwíz.
 His host, as 'twere a moving mountain, marched
 Audaciously as far as Nahrawán.

Khusrau Parwíz, on hearing, was in dudgeon
 At such swift action and sent spies to note
 The progress of events with these behests :—
 " We first must learn the feeling of his troops :
 If like Bahrám Chúbína they intend
 To fight or whether we shall have delay,
 And whether he be foremost at the centre
 Or at the wings, his state at audience-time,
 And if he hunteth while upon the march."

C. 1870

They went unnoted by the troops, gat news,
 And came back to the Sháh all privily.
 They said : " His troops are for Bahrám Chúbína,
 All from the highest chieftains to the boys.
 In marching he is sometimes at the centre,
 And sometimes with the right or left or baggage.
 We saw him long of sight and diligent—
 A cautious warrior and cavalier.
 His kinsmen all are in his confidence ;
 He hath no need of strangers, giveth audience
 In royal fashion, hunteth on the plain
 With cheetahs, knoweth but the usages

Of Sháhs, and readeth all the book of Dimna.”¹

Khusrau Parwíz said to his minister :—
 “ A long task faceth us. Bahrám Chúbína,
 When he is charging at an enemy,
 Would break the hearts of dragons in the deep,
 And from the monarch of the world withal
 Hath learned the methods of the kings of kings,
 While, thirdly, with Kalíla,² so to speak,
 As minister none hath so shrewd a scribe.”

Then said he to Bandwí and Gustaham :—
 “ Our mates are grief and toil.”

Now when Gurdwí,
 Dármán, the monarch of Armenia,
 Shápúr and Andamán, shrewd chiefs and fighters,
 Were set in secret conclave with the Sháh
 He thus addressed them : “ Mighty warriors !
 When wisdom is a light within the brain
 Then knowledge is the body’s coat of mail,
 Which naught except the sword of death will sever,
 A sword whereto a steel helm is as wax.
 I am but young to you so cannot walk
 The world aright ; instruct me what to do.
 Who suffereth from these wounds ? ”

An archmage said :—

C. 1871 “ Thou wilt be happy and the Grace and provand
 Of empty brains. Now since the mystery
 Of this our whirling world grew manifest
 Hath wisdom been disparted into four.
 One portion is the king’s for Grace and wisdom
 Fit him ; another is the pious man’s ;
 The third the loyal liege’s who as near
 The royal person tendereth advice ;
 The wise account the small part left the thane’s.
 The impious and unthankful have no wisdom.
 If now the king will hear the old sage’s words,

¹ The Fables of Bidpai. See Vol. vii. p. 382.

² *Id.*

And fix his heart's eye on them, he will eat
Their fruit when they have passed within his heart."

The Sháh replied : " Were I to write this down
In gold its Grace and vogue would ask no less ;
The archimages' utterances are gems,
But I have other purposes at heart,
For when our two hosts meet, and when our spearheads
Shall reach to Gemini, I shall not be
Blamed if I quit the centre and advancing
Before the host call to Bahrám Chúbína,
That impious and self-seeking general,
Show him a peaceful face, make much of him,
And praise him. If he shall receive my words
'Tis well, for who at court can be his peer ?
But if he seeketh fight I too will fight,
And range my host against his."

All the leaders
Assented to his scheme, the great applauded,
And hailed him king of earth ; all said : " Oh ! be
The ills of fortune far from thee, O king !
Be victory, Grace, majesty, and crown
Of king of kings thine own."

He answered thus :—
" So be it ; enough. May none of us behold
Disunion or defeat."

Then from Baghdád,
And with new camp-enclosures, he marched forth
Upon the plain. As the two powers drew near
Upon the march, the captain of the host's
On that side and on this the Sháh's, and when
The world's light had been taken in the toils,
And pitchy night had shaken out its locks,
Scouts went forth from both hosts to guard the
approaches ;
And when night, frightened by the sword of day
Had fled dry-lipped and quaking, rose the din

Of tymbals from both camps and Sol led forth
 To war. Then at the Sháh's command Bandví
 And Gustaham put on their iron helms,
 C. 1872 And went with other chiefs of ardent soul
 Toward the canal¹ of Nahrawán, whereat
 The outpost came before Bahrám Chúbína,
 And said : "There is a force two bowshots off."

On hearing this he ranged his host and called
 His veterans and bestrode a piebald steed
 With musk-black tail—a noble caracoller
 With brazen hoofs. An Indian scimitar
 Sufficed to arm him, and its stroke was like
 The levin from the cloud. He urged his horse
 As 'twere a lightning-flash. That miscreant,
 Izid Gashasp, was on his left. Withal
 There came Hamdán Gashasp² and Yalán-sína,
 All rage and enmity, while three bold Turks,
 Sprung from the Khán, made ready to take vengeance
 Upon Khusrau Parwíz and swore : "When we
 Shall see the Sháh out-distancing his troops,
 Him will we bring to thee in bonds or slain,
 And thy realm shall repose in peace."

On one side
 There was Khusrau Parwíz and on the other
 The paladin, between was Nahrawán,
 While on both sides the armies watched them meet,
 And how the paladin the Sháh would greet.

§ 5

*How Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína met and
 parleyed*

Bahrám Chúbína and Khusrau Parwíz
 Thus met, one cheerful and the other grim.

¹ "Spring" in the original.

² Reading with P.

The world-lord rode an ivory grey and wore
 A gold and jewelled crown ; his robe from Chín
 Was of brocade of gold. Gurdwí as guide
 Preceded him, Bandwí and Gustaham
 Were at his side, and therewithal Kharrád,
 Son of Barzín, who wore a helm of gold.
 They all were clad in iron, gold, and silver ;
 Their golden girdles were occult with gems.
 Bahrám Chúbína paled with rage on seeing
 The king of kings and thus addressed his chiefs :—
 This whoreson miscreant from low estate
 And boorish manner hath attained to manhood,
 Grown powerful and girt himself for action.
 The writing of the down is manifest
 Upon the ivory rondure of his face ;
 So now he hath become Sháh Farídún
 With mace and crown and caught the imperial style,
 But speedily will this world end for him.
 This dark-souled bastard leadeth on his troops
 Like Núshírwán. Scan thoroughly his host
 To see if there be of it one of name.
 I cannot spy one warlike cavalier

C. 1873

That could confront me for a single breath.
 Now shall he look upon the deeds of men,
 Steeds charging, scimitars, the dust of war,
 The clash of battle-axes, showers of arrows,
 The heroes' shouts, the captives, give and take.
 The elephants are driven from the field
 When I march forth to battle. At our voice
 The mountains melt and warriors lose their prowess.
 I take the rivers with my sword and turn
 Their waters into blood."

He spake and spurred
 His pied steed, thou hadst said : " His flying eagle."
 He chose himself a narrow battlefield,
 The troops in wonder watching him, and thence

Went on to Nahrawán and there confronted
The glorious Great with certain of Írán,
Armed for the conflict with Khusrau Parwíz,
Who said : “ O noble chiefs ! who recogniseth
Bahrám Chúbína ? ”

Said Gurdwí : “ O king !
Observe the warrior on the piebald steed,
With white juppon, black baldrick, and who rideth
About among the troops.”

He recognised
The man at sight and said : “ Yon lengthy one,
Smoke-hued and riding on the noble piebald ? ”

Gurdwí replied : “ The same and bent on ill.”
“ If thou shouldst question,” said Khusrau Parwíz,
“ That crook-back he would answer churlishly ;
With that hooked nose and half shut eyes ‘ he hath,’
Thou wouldest say, ‘ a wrathful heart.’ Thou seest
That he is wicked by his looks, God’s foe.
I mark naught of submission in his head,
And that none will command him.”

To Bandwí

And Gustaham he said thereafter : “ I
Will give an illustration of this saw :—
‘ If ‘neath the load the donkey will not pass
Then take the weighty burden to the ass.’
If some bold dív hath gulled Bahrám Chúbína
How should he see God’s way ? All hearts that ache
With greed are helped not by the advice of wisdom.
When thou goest forth to war debate is over.
We must consider all from first to last :
Who knoweth which will conquer in the fight,
Which host be doleful or illustrious ?
Considering those troops so well arrayed,
And with a leader eager for the fray,
Such as Bahrám Chúbína is—a man
Grim as a lusty dív—and militants

Like ravening wolves, I will, with your consent,
 So that disgrace may not attach to me,
 Be first to make advances ; 'twill be better
 For me than showing slackness in the fight.
 If I receive from him a fair reply
 His late misdoings shall be obsolete ;
 I will bestow some corner of the world
 Upon him and by bounty earn his thanks ;
 Our warfare and endeavours in the field
 Shall end in peace—a gain to us. No doubt
 The wisest course is safest. Good folk joy
 When monarchs act as merchants do."

" O king ! "

Said Gustaham, " live happily while time
 Shall last. Thou scatterest gems in talk and art
 More wise. Do what thou wildest. Thou art just,
 And yon slave is unjust ; thy head is full
 Of brains and his of wind."

Khusrau Parwíz,

On hearing this, advanced before his troops,
 Held distant parle with brave Bahrám Chúbína,
 And sought for feast in war-time. Thus he said :—
 " Illustrious man ! what business hast thou here
 Upon the battlefield ? Thou art as though
 The jewel of the court, the wealth of throne
 And diadem, the army's prop in war-time,
 And as a bright light at our festivals.
 Thou art ambitious, brave, and servest God ;
 Ne'er may the Almighty take His hand from thee.
 I have considered of thy case, approved
 Thine acts, will entertain thee and thy troops,
 And make my soul glad by the sight of thee.
 I will appoint thee general of Írán,
 As is but right, and I will pray to God
 For thee."

When brave Bahrám Chúbína heard

C. 1874

He gave his black-tailed, piebald steed the rein,
 Saluted from his seat, paused, and replied :—
 “ In good case, blithe, and fortunate am I,
 And may the day of greatness ne’er be thine,
 Who knowest not kingship whether just or not.
 The Aláns’ king in the conduct of his kingship
 Is being helped by the unfortunate !
 I have considered of thy case and suppled
 A lasso for thy sake. I will erect
 Forthwith a lofty gibbet, make thy hands
 Fast in the coils, and hang thee up thereon
 As thou deservest, giving thee a glimpse
 Of fortune’s bitterness.”

Khusrau Parwíz

Heard and his cheeks became like fenugreek.

C. 1875

He knew : “ Bahrám Chúbína will not yield,
 And part with crown and throne,” and thus replied :—
 “ Ingrate ! No good man would speak thus. When
 guests

Come to thy house from far dost thou revile them
 At feasting-time ? This note is not the wont
 Of Sháhs or of the exalted cavaliers.
 No Arab and no Persian e’er have acted
 Like this in thirty centuries. The wise
 Would shame hereat, so go not thou about
 The door of thanklessness. When guests give thee
 A glorious greeting one must be a dív
 To answer as thou dost. Ill days, I fear,
 Await thee for thou knowest that thy counsels
 Are troubled. Thy resource is in the hands
 Of that Great King who liveth ever more,
 Whose word is law. Thou sinnest in His sight,
 And art ingrate, with person in disgrace,
 And heart in fear. In calling me the king
 Of the Aláns thou takest but one side
 Of my descent unless I am unworthy

Of king of kingship and the cap of power
 As having for my grandsire Núshírwán,
 And for my sire Hurmuzd. Whom knowest thou
 More worthy ? ”

Said Bahrám Chúbína : “ Wretch,
 And mad in deed and word ! first, for thy talk
 Of guests : thou art thyself new-fangled though
 Thy talk is of the past. What have the words
 Of Sháhs to do with thee ? Thou art no sage,
 Or valiant cavalier. Thou wast the Aláns’ king,
 And now though thou art chief thou art withal
 Inferior to the slave of slaves. Thou art
 A fruitless evil-doer in the world ;
 No Sháh art thou or fit to lead the mighty ;
 But me men bless as Sháh. I will not let thee
 Set foot on earth. Moreover, when I said :—
 ‘ Thou art ill-starred, unfit for rule and kingship,’
 I said it, worthless Sháh ! and may the state
 Be never thine ! because the Frániáns
 Are foes of thine, will struggle to uproot thee,
 Will rend thee, skin and veins, and give the dogs
 Thy bones to eat.”

Khusrau Parwíz replied :—

“ Knave ! why so fierce and haughty, for foul words
 Disgrace a man ? But from the very first
 Thy disposition hath been thus ; clear wisdom
 Is severed from thy brain. Blest is the noble
 That eateth wisdom’s fruits ! Fey dívs discourse
 At large. I would not have a paladin
 Like thee made weak and ruined by his temper.
 I prithee banish anger from thy heart,
 Be not so moved and charm away thy wrath.
 Remember God, the just Possessor ; base
 Thy wisdom on His justice. Thou hast now
 A height before thee higher than Bístún,
 And if a king shall ever come of thee

C. 1876

The Egyptian thorn will bear. Thy heart is full
 Of thoughts of rule but we shall see what God
 Ordaineth. Who hath taught thee such ill carriage,
 Such principles of Áhriman, I know not,
 But thy colloguer seeketh for thy death."

He spake and lighting from his ivory steed,
 And taking from his head the precious crown,
 Wailed with his face turned sunwards, put his hope
 In God, and said : " O glorious Judge who bringest
 The tree of hope to fruit ! Thou knowest who
 Is now affronting me, Thy slave, and how
 We should for very shame bewail the crown.
 If royalty is to desert our race
 I will not strive but be a thrall within
 A Fane of Fire and live on milk and herbs,
 Hoard neither gold nor silver and at prayer-time
 Wear woollen ; but if rule is to be mine
 Thee will I serve in truth and equity.
 Oh ! let my host prevail, give not my crown
 And palace to a slave. If I succeed,
 And haste to bring before Ázargashasp¹
 Crown, steed, and armlets, earrings, torque, and robe
 Of gold adorned with gems, and pour withal
 Upon the dome of lapis-lazuli
 A hundred sacks of red dínárs, and give
 The worshippers five thousand score of drachms,
 When I become the monarch of the world,
 Then will I strive to reinstate some city
 Unjustly desolated and the haunt
 Of onager and lion, leave it not
 To thorns and weeds, but send on my return
 From battle five score thousands of dínárs.
 Those of the scions of Bahrám and others
 That shall be brought to me as prisoners

¹ *i.e.*, when according to Sásánian custom he makes his pilgrimage to the Fire-temple at Shíz. Cf. Vol. i. p. 60.

Will I make servants of the glorious Fíre,
And glad the hearts of priest and archimage.”

He spake these words and rose up from the dust ;
That speaker sore-oppressed was justified.
Swift as a dust-cloud from the place of prayer
He came and shouted to Bahrám Chúbína :—
“ Thou hellish, dív-like slave remote from wisdom,
And far removed from precedent and Grace !

Some rabid, tyrannous, and lusty dív
Hath blinded thee. Thou hast, in wisdom’s stead,
Wrath and revenge, and won the dívs’ applause.

A thornbrake is a city, Hell a garden
To thee ; the lamp of wisdom hath died out
Within thy brain and robbed thy mind and heart
Of lustre. It was but a lying witch
That led thee thus through greatness to a fall.¹

To-day thou settest hand upon a shoot
With leaves of bane and fruit of colocynth.
Thy stock ne’er so aspired nor is the aspirant
Applauded. God hath not bestowed on thee
The Grace and stature. Hast forgot Gurgín,
Son of Milád ?² Thou unjust wretch ! ne’er hope
For what will never be. The crab hath not
The eagle’s wing nor doth the eagle soar
Aloft the sun. By holy God, by throne
And crown if I shall come upon thee hostless,
And if I blow a chilling blast upon thee . . . !
Thou hast not seen me yet in fight and I
Have heard but thy harsh words. I lean on Him
That giveth victory. If I am unworthy
To be a king let me not live a liege.”

Bahrám Chúbína said : “ Thou fool possessed !
Thy sire, that world-lord friendly to the Faith,
Who ne’er blew cold on anyone, thou knewest not

C. 1877

¹ Cf. p. 156 seq.

² Cf. Vol. iii. p. 292 seq. and p. 72.

To prize but flungest vilely from the throne,
 And thou wouldest fain be world-lord after him,
 Be vigilant and wise ! Thou art impure,
 God's foe, and wilt experience naught but ill
 From Him that giveth good, while if Hurmuzd
 Had been unjust and time and earth exclaimed
 Against him 'tis not fit for thee, his son,
 To king it in Írán and in Túrán.
 Thy life will not be passed upon the throne ;
 Content thee with the charnel for thou art
 Afar from fortune. For Hurmuzd will I
 Exact revenge ; moreover, I am king
 Within Írán. Now make this clear to me :
 What upright man agreed that thou shouldst sear
 The eyes of Sháhs or bid one do the deed ?
 Take thou henceforth the kingship to be mine
 From Sun to Fish's back.”¹

Khusrau Parwíz

Replied : “ May his sire's woe ne'er joy this slave.
 Thus was it written and what was to be
 Hath been ; how long wilt thou add word to word ?
 C. 1878 Thou makest thyself king, thou who at death
 Wilt not possess a shroud ! So far as folk,
 And barded steeds can go thou art a monarch—
 In expectation—but thou hast no house,
 Home, land, and birth ; thou art a windbag king.
 With thy false title and such wares as these
 Thou wilt not shine upon the royal throne.
 There have been brave men ere thy time—aspirants
 With massive maces—yet they never sought
 The kingship, being lieges, nor pretended
 To crown and throne, but thou becomest ever
 More rabid and art lost to modesty.²
 The World-lord maketh kings for justice-sake,
 Or for their parts or on account of birth,

¹ See Vol. i, p. 71.

² Couplet omitted.

Bestowing kingship on the worthiest,
The wisest or the least injurious.

My sire made me the monarch of the Aláns
Since through thy wiles he was concerned for me,
And now God hath bestowed on me the kingship,
Throne, greatness, and the crown of power. I have
them

From Him who is the Master of the world,
From Him who knoweth all, by the appointment
Of king Hurmuzd who from his sire received
The throne as heirloom, from high priest and sages,
The mighty men and the experienced chiefs,
According to the Faith which once Zarduhshht,
The wise and ancient, brought from Paradise,¹
And gave Luhrásp the word of God, which he
Accepted and transmitted to Gushtásp.
All those that have aggrieved me, all whose treasures
I have received, are under my protection,
Be they my friends or foes. The mendicants
At lurk from wasted cities will I make
Rich, be they outcasts or of mine own kin,
And bramble-brakes like Paradise, fulfilled
With men, with cattle, and with tilth, ignore,
By way of compensation, no good thing
Until we quit this world for that, will make
Our heart the scales, will weigh, and use the might
Of our own arm. What time Hurmuzd, the world-lord,
Ruled justly, earth and time rejoiced in him.
The son past doubt should have his father's throne,
Should have the crown, the girdle, and the fortune,
But as for thee, thou wicked, crafty man,
Who wast the first to war against Hurmuzd !
No ill hath come unless by thy command,
Thy spells, thy guile, and plotting. If God will
I will make dark in vengeance for the Sháh

C. 1879

¹ See Vol. v., p. 33.

Bright Sol to thee. Now who deserveth crown,
And if not I who is there ? ”

“ Valiant one ! ”

Rejoined Bahrám Chúbína, “ he is worthy
That carried off from thee the sovereignty.
When, from the daughter of Pápak, Ardshír
Was born, and the Ashkánians had the sway,
Grew he not mighty and slew Ardawán,
Whose throne he won ? And now five hundred years
Have passed by and Sásánian heads and crowns
Are waxing cold. Now is my day for throne
And diadem ; the headship and the work,
Allied with conquering fortune, are for me.
When I behold thy fortune, face, and troops,
Thy crown and throne, like some led lion roused
Will I abolish the Sásánians,
Erase them from the roll and trample down
Sásán, both head and crown. The power should be
The Ashkánians’ if the wise would hear aright.”

Khusrau Parwíz replied : “ Contentious fool !
If kingship is for those of royal race
What dost thou in their midst ? What are the folk
Of Rai but double-faced ? And what as men ?
But few at first they joined Sikandar’s host,
And arming on the Rúmans’ side soon won
The Kaian throne. It did not please the Maker,
And ruin came upon them from themselves ;
The Judge that giveth succour crowned Ardshír,
And he was worthy of the royal crown
Although he had no treasure and dínárs.
Those great men’s work hath passed away, our words
Are wind. God choosing him for sovereignty
Saw naught but good in him. Now who deserveth
The government and who shall be the lord
Of this unstable world ? Inform me truly,
Choose the good path and shun perversity.”

Bahrám Chúbína hearing changed his ground,
And said : “ I am Bahrám, the warrior,
The rooter up of kings.”

Khusrau Parwíz

Made answer : “ Thou hast heard the sage’s saw :—
‘ The equipage of greatness ne’er commit
To mean or wayward folk of little wit,
For they, when they have got it from thee, take
Their ease and if thou ask it back they quake.’
My father, who was rash and ill-advised,
Discerned not close from open and among
His many great and small gave men of straw
The royal equipage which came not back
Upon demand for he that was possessed
Thereof had grown intoxicate thereby.

C. 1880

What was the saying of the sweet-voiced sage ?
‘ Twill cause thee pain and toil to stablish men
Unstable : woo not the ungrateful then.’
Thou wast a brave man, keen and of high aims,
But thine ill nature made thee an ill-doer.
My father made thee first among the chiefs ;
Thou wast the greatest in the sovereignty ;
But royal favour and the silvern throne
Have made thee drunk and err. The name Chúbína
Is now Bahrám, the silvern throne become
A snare to thee. There seated thou art fain
To mount the moon ; thou wast the general,
And wouldest be Sháh. No sage e’er held such talk ;
I wot that thou consortest with the Dív.”

Bahrám Chúbína answered : “ Evil one !
Reviling is thy sole accomplishment.
Thou heedest not God’s covenant, thou seekest
This state whereof thou art not worthy, and blindest
The Sháh ! How can such deeds as these be hidden ?
Thy friends are hostile, being thine in word,
But mine in heart. The Khán is mine ally

With all the armies of Írán and Chín,
 For I am just and kindly with a hand
 And sword. No enemy will conquer me.
 I will transfer the power from Párs to Rai,
 And ban the name of Kaian, set up justice,
 And reinstate the customs of Milád.¹
 I spring from famed Árash² and am in war
 A fire unquenchable, the grandson I
 Of great Gurgín and the consuming Flame
 Upon Barzín. It was king Sáwa's mind
 To leave not in Írán throne, crown, or signet,
 To rase the Fanes of Fire and suffer not
 Naurúz and Sada feast. The Íránians too
 Were all enslaved till I girt up my loins,
 And by an arrow from my bow determined
 King Sáwa's life. If thou knowest not the sum
 Of that rash monarch's troops go count a thousand
 Four hundred times. Twelve hundred elephants
 Of war had he. Thou wouldest have said : 'The
 earth

Will hold them not.' That great host fled while I
 Roared like a lusty lion in their rear.

C. 1881 Know thou that none without accomplishment
 Doth rashly seek the seat of mighty men.
 My helmet savoureth of the crown, my sword
 Will win the ivory throne, but if a gnat
 Shall war with thee 'twill bring thee from thy throne
 To earth."

Khusrau Parwíz replied : "Thou luckless !
 Why not be mindful of Gurgín at Rai,
 Whom fortune never succoured in the world,
 And who had not throne, majesty, and state ?
 None knew thy name ; thou wast obscure and poor.
 The great Mihrán Sitád came and informed
 The monarch of the age about thee, thus

¹ Cf. p. 72.

² See Vol. vi. p. 197.

Exalting thee from darksome dust, but thou
Hast lost sight of that day ! He furnished thee
With treasures, arms, and troops, and Rustam's
banner

Resplendent as the moon. God did not will
That Turkmans out of Chín should waste Irán,
And helped thee in the fight with them ; thy helm
Rose cloudward since the Lord of circling heaven
Willed the Great King success ; but thou dost take
The merit to thyself who never sawest
The great and good. If kingship is to quit
The Kaian race why girdest thou thy loins ?
'Twill need one like Sikandar to obscure
The fortune of the king of kings. Mayst thou
With thy dív's face and dusty hue attain
To naught except a ditch. Thy waywardness
And conduct dimmed the Sháh's days. Thou hast
put

My name on drachms and striven to ruin me.
Thou art ill's source in this world and supreme
Among transgressors. Whereso blood is shed
The guilt is thine. Thou wilt not find by night
In slumber what thou seekest for all day
Beneath the sun. O luckless and unjust !
Give not thy whole time to perversity,
Inflict not rashly outrage on thyself,
And so remain unjust and miserable.
Think how to gain God's favour and make wisdom
And truth thy task for what is mine and thine
Will pass ; time reckoneth our every breath.
Who will declare, when thou hast decked thy
heart
With guile, that guile is better than the right ?
At thy behest whate'er thou wilt is thine,
Thine to one half the realm. Then in this world
Thou wilt be happy, all at ease, and far

C. 1882

From hurt of foes, and when this Wayside Inn
 Thou quittest thou wilt pass un-irked. No need
 To labour this, for in the Zandavasta
 Thus saith Zarduhsh: 'He that abandoneth
 The holy Faith hath neither fear nor awe
 Of God within his heart. Let him be counsellec
 For one year: if thy counsel profit not
 Let him be slain by order of the Sháh,
 And his offending corpse flung on the road:
 But if he is the Sháh's own enemy
 Let him be slain forthwith.' Men in good sooth
 Will shed thy blood for thy perverted fortune
 Requireth this. Now will a wretched life
 Be thine and Fire thy place when thou departest.
 If thou continuest long thus to revolt
 From Sháh and from God's justice there will come
 Remorse for thine unseemly words and deeds.
 Thou ailest and the drug for thee is counsel;
 I am endeavouring to make thee whole,
 But if desire and envy rule thy heart
 Say so and I will send a different leech.¹
 Thy victories had made thee somebody,
 But thoughts of treasure caused thee to rebel.
 Heard hast thou that Zahhák was impious,
 That dívs and warlocks filled the world with fear,
 And how when he had vexed the nobles' hearts
 The glorious Farídún entreated him.²
 Thy troops, alive or dead, are all my slaves
 At heart. Through thee they have obtained some
 glory,
 And so have turned their heads from right, but when
 I shall display my treasures, and incline
 The warriors' hearts, not one of all this host
 Will bide with thee because thou hast not name,
 Or Grace or goods. When thou didst overcome

¹ Couplet omitted.² Vol. i. p. 168 seq.

King Sáwa all the troops believed that they
Would never see defeat, they were so drunk
And satiate with spoil. Thy warriors,
So fearless, must not perish by my hand ;
I would not that the country of Irán
Should lose this mighty warrior-host—all chiefs
And nobles—and defeat befall the throne
Of might. Now tell me, in Árish's¹ days
Who was the Sháh for this may end our parley ? ”

Bahrám Chúbína answered : “ Minúchihr
Was then the Sháh and had the host and crown.”

Khusrau Parwíz replied : “ Ill-natured one !
Thou know'st that he was monarch of the world ;
Know'st thou not that Árish was but his slave,
And bowed to his directions and commands ? ”

C. 1883

Just so it was with valiant Kai Khusrau
With such as Rustam for his officer,
For Rustam might have seized the world, the throne,
And style of Sháh, but held to precedent,
And never glanced that way. Then why dost thou
Not follow me and hail Khusrau Parwíz
As Sháh ? Thou dust-face ! thou art but a dív,
Like Áhri man ; the crown and throne of Sháhs
Have stirred thy greed.”

Bahrám Chúbína said :—

“ Thou miscreant ! rightly art thou from Sásán,
Who was a shepherd and was shepherd-born ;
Pápak was not the first to make him one.”²

Khusrau Parwíz replied : “ Thou evil-doer !
Thine arrogance is not Sásán's. Thy words
Are wholly lies, and falsehood is no honour.
Thou comest of bad-natured, worthless men,
And spring'st not from Sásán.”

¹ See Vol. v. p. 12.

² According to both the traditions given in the Sháhnáma
Sásán's ancestors had been shepherds or in similar menial employ-
ment for generations. See Vols. v. p. 291, vi. 211.

“ The shepherdship,”

Bahrám Chúbína answered, “ of Sásán
Ne'er will be hidden.”

Said Khusrau Parwíz :—

“ Dárá, when dying, gave not to Sásán
The crown of majesty. Though lost was fortune
Was lineage lost ? No talk will turn injustice
To justice. Seek'st thou, having for thine own
Such prudence, rede, and Grace, the imperial throne ?”

§ 6

*How Bahrám Chúbína and Khusrau Parwíz returned,
how Gurdyá advised Bahrám Chúbína, and how
Khusrau Parwíz told his Purpose to the Iránians*

He spake and smiled, turned from Bahrám Chúbína,
And set his face towards his host. Of those
Three valiant Turks who served the Khán of Chín,
Were savage as a wolf and had assured
Bahrám Chúbína : “ We, to win renown,
Will on the day of battle bring to thee
The person of the Sháh alive or dead
Before the troops,”¹ one impious horseman, strong,
Fierce, fearless, rushed forth seeking fight and grim
With sixty coils of lasso on his arm,
And drawing near that steed of ivory,
And aiming at the splendid crown, flung forth
His lasso coiled, and caught the Sháh's crowned head ;
But Gustaham clave with his sword the lasso,
The Sháh's head 'scaped from harm, while brave
Bandwí
Strung up his bow and with his arrows robbed

The air of light. He loosed a poplar shaft
 Against the Turk ; that battle-seeker fled,
 And to that miscreant said Bahrám Chúbína :—
 “ Be sombre dust thine only hiding-place !
 Who said : ‘ Assail the Sháh ? ’ Didst thou not see
 me

Upstanding in his presence with respect ? ”

Sick, mind and body, he returned to camp.
 His sister heard of his return, put off
 Her splendid crown and, when a slave had brought
 Her veil, ran forth in dudgeon sore of heart
 To meet him and thus spake : “ O warlike chief !
 How didst thou fare, say, with Khusrau Parwíz ?
 If he be hot and hasty through his youth
 Relax no effort in the cause of peace.”

The brave Bahrám Chúbína answered thus :—
 “ One must not reckon him among the Sháhs.
 No valiant cavalier or sage is he,
 Not generous or brilliant. Parts are better
 Than birth, and kings should have them.”

His wise sister

Replied : “ O shrewd, ambitious chief ! if I
 Say much thou wilt not hear me but display
 Ill-temper and ill-nature. Call to mind
 The saying of the aphorist of Balkh :—
 ‘ When any one shall truth from hiding bring,
 And tell thy faults, truth is a bitter thing.’
 Think not to waste thy country for thou hast
 Thy share of earth. A very wise man said :—
 ‘ To have an ox’s horn an ass once tried,
 And lost forthwith his ears on either side.’
 Court not the world’s reproach ; none of thy race
 Hath worn the crown. Had this youth intervened not
 I had not been thus seared and dark of soul ;
 But as it is his sire is living, the throne
 Of sovereignty is still in place yet thou

Must interfere ! How it will end I know not,
 But all night long mine eyes are filled with blood.
 Thine only aim is pain and malison ;
 Thou sniffest rashly at a poison-flower.
 How folk will call Chúbína infamous,
 The name Bahrám disfame ! God will be wroth
 Withal and Hell the prison of thy soul.
 The world is not for every one, my brother !
 And naught abideth save a fair renown.

C. 1885

Consider now, who was it sought thee out
 Save king Hurmuzd ? But since king Sáwa's throne
 And goods came to thy hands thou didst assume
 The crown, and having grown renowned through him
 Art seeking for the imperial throne ; but know
 That every good thing is from God and be
 Not ingrate to our Sháh ; presume not thus
 Upon thy stricken fields. Thou hast gained honour,
 But be not arrogant. Thou hast at heart
 Consorted with the Dív and hast grown guilty
 In God's sight. When Hurmuzd was wroth and raved
 Through what the foul Áyín Gashasp had said
 Thou shouldest have been patient and not made it
 A liege's opportunity for war ;
 And in his great affliction when his son
 Came forth to fight from Barda' 'twas thy duty
 To visit the young Sháh and ornament
 His new throne as he wished. The youth had then
 Adopted thine advice and thou hadst not
 Seen evil days but quiet, joy, and triumph.
 Why these designs upon the crown and throne ?
 Thou knowest that there still are princes left,
 Both old and young, descended from Ardshír,
 With wealth and countless hosts. Who in Írán
 Will hail thee king ? If any king with treasure
 And troops could dare to eye this land of ours
 It had been Sáwa, prince of Chín, none else,

Who marched upon the country of Irán ;
 But holy God made thee his opposite,
 And saved our land and elders. Since the World-lord
 Made this world and spread over it high heaven
 Men have not seen a cavalier like Sám,
 Whom not the rending lion would confront,
 Yet when it happened that Naudar became
 Unjust and trampled on his father's ways,
 And when the nobles called on Sám and had
 The turquoise throne made ready, 'God forbid,'
 He said, 'that ever captain of the host
 Should contemplate the throne because the dust
 Of Minúchihr is mine, my coronet
 The footings of Naudar's.'¹ I recognise
 In Sám thy better ; he sought not the kingship,
 Not being ill-conditioned. So too Zál
 And elephantine Rustam never sought
 To rule our folk. Know, I have said this, brother !
 Because the fortunate alone who hath
 August hands, Grace, and high birth, and is wise,
 Of ardent heart and just can take the throne.
 I know not what will come on thee, for wisdom
 Hath vanished from thy heart ! "

Bahrám Chúbína

C. 1886

Made answer : " 'Tis all true and holy God
 Is witness, but the thing hath gone too far ;
 My heart and brain are sick with greed and I
 Must grow whole or resign my head to death,
 Which pierceth helms of steel. If I am stricken
 By this young Sháh my troops will take from him
 His throne and, black at heart with vengeance, set
 Another there."

The youthful king for his part
 Recrossed the bridge of Nahrawán, rejoicing,
 Called all the captains of the host, set those

¹ See Vol. i. p. 340.

Entitled by their rank beside the throne
 Of sovereignty, and said : “ Good-hearted chiefs,
 Adept and veteran ! of this my kingship
 This is my primal act—a mere essay—
 And none doth owe us praise though our intent
 Be good, and ye have had no good from us
 While we must now augment your toils and griefs.
 Ye served mine ancestors and have seen much
 Of this world’s salts and sours. I will disclose
 My purpose, hidden from the host, to you ;
 My words must go no further, that would mar
 My scheme if it were published to the troops.
 I mean to lead the host to-night to battle,
 For I have parleyed with Bahrám Chúbína,
 Who is an active, skilful cavalier,
 Though I discerned no wisdom in his head,
 Or in the heads of his illustrious troops.
 His fight with Sáwa is his only theme,
 He telleth o’er and o’er the same old tale.
 He thinketh me a foolish youth and fain
 Would frighten me with mace and scimitar,
 Not knowing that I attack by night and so
 Gain confidence. If ye will share the fray
 With me I will not loiter but, when night
 Shall steep her face in ambergris and loose
 Her musky locks, do ye mount armed and grasping
 The mace and scimitar.”

They all agreed
 To do the Sháh’s behest. When he had gone
 Back to his tent he put all strangers forth.
 He sent for Gustaham and for Bandwí,
 And for Gurdwí, a veteran warrior,
 And told his purpose of a night-attack
 In hopes that they would aid. Said Gustaham :—
 “ O king ! why put such confidence in fight ?
 A camisade may alienate thy troops.

Thy soldiers and the soldiers of the foe
 Are one in heart and body ; on one side
 Are grandsons, on the other grandsires. What
 Deception can there be ? Here is a brother,
 And there a father ; they are all akin ;
 How shall son war with sire ? Encourage not
 The wishes of thy foes by this design.
 This was no matter for the host ; thy words
 Have ruined all."

Gurdwí said : " All is over,
 E'en as a wind that passeth o'er the plain.
 Power, passion, treasury, and troops make err
 A young man's head. Do not be thou to-night
 Upon the field and suffer not the host
 And treasure to be lost, because I doubt not
 That all our secret plans and preparations
 Will be reported to the other side ;
 Yield not thy head then to the enemy."

Pleased with the rede Khusrau Parwíz assented,
 Selected certain chiefs devoted to him
 For good and ill—Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 And Gustaham, the Lion, and Shápúr,
 And Andiyán, the valorous, Bandwí,
 Kharrád, withal, the Lustre of the host,

Nastúh, the chief and burner up of heroes,
 And others who would serve to guard the troops,
 The treasure and himself. They sought a hill
 That would avail if fight were toward—a place
 All grass and apt for feasts. Khusrau Parwíz
 Thence viewed the host from far.

Bahrám Chúbína,
 The brave, for his part mounted and when great
 And small drew near he questioned of the
 chiefs :—

" What tidings have ye of your kith and kin ?
 Send to them, ye that have such—men at one

With you in word and Faith. If they will come
 And do my will, and stake their lives as pledges
 Of their sincerity, I will enrich them,
 And they shall all be nobles like yourselves.
 The troops from Barda' and from Ardabil,
 And slack Armenians—a band or two—
 Remain. We fear them not in fight while those
 From Barda' are but as a pinch of dust."

C. 1888

The chieftains heard what brave Bahrám Chúbína
 Proposed and chose a warrior from the host,
 Sage, fluent, heedful, who thus charged departed,
 And speeding onward through the longsome night
 Declared his message to the Iránian chiefs,
 And heard their answer : " Till the hosts engage
 We will not leave Khusrau Parwíz. This matter,
 We fear, will prove a long one. He will make
 A night-attack, so feel not ye secure."

The envoy, hearing this, went swift as dust
 Back to the army of the paladin,
 And as a privy matter, every word,
 He there reported all that he had heard.

§ 7

*How Bahrám Chúbína attacked the Army of Khusrau
 Parwíz by Night and how Khusrau Parwíz fled*

Now when Bahrám Chúbína was aware
 That all the troops were well disposed to him
 His host lit watch-fires and set lights ablaze
 In every quarter. Then that Lion chose
 A valiant band fit to subdue the world,
 Six thousand Sabres as the leaders reckoned.
 Bahrám Chúbína told them : " When the drum
 Shall beat at cock-crow raise the battle-cry,

Attack and crown the nobles' heads with blood."

Led by the three proud Turks the troops sped forth
At his command and full of spite and vengeance
Fell on the army of the king. Arose
A din of mace and sword and battle-ax,
The earth was iron and the clouds were dust.
The troops all asked : " Where is Khusrau Parwíz ?
The day and victory to-day are ours."

Khusrau Parwíz was on the hill in anguish,
His eyes were full of blood, his cheeks the hue
Of lapis-lazuli, and, till the shafts
Of dawn shot up, the clashing of the hosts
Confounded him, but when the dark night's skirt
Had vanished, and he saw the battlefield
All killed and wounded, to his chiefs he said :—
" Help and put forth your powers against the foe,
For God, the Victor, is mine aid and prop,
And now my work is blows and scimitar."

He charged amain at those three Turks. Turks ?
Nay,

Three fierce and savage wolves. One closed with him,
Unsheathed his glittering glaive and sought to strike
The king upon the head ; the royal rider
Put up his shield to save it, thrust beneath
The guard, and laid his foeman low. " Famed
fighters !

C. 1889

Slack not the struggle now," he cried, but still
His troops all turned away, abandoning
That world-aspirant shamefully who then
Said to Bandwí and Gustaham : " Hereof
I augur ill. I have no child grown up,
Or other kindred, fitted for the crown,
And if I should be slain in fight the world
Would have no king."

Bandwí made answer thus :—
" O noble prince ! may this world yearn in love

For thee. Thy troops are gone, abide not thou,
For none is left to aid thee."

To Gurdwí

Then said the king: "Haste with Tukhár and
take

The tent-enclosure, treasure, and brocade,
Crown, captives, purses, and the ivory throne,
All that thou canst, and take a thousand horse
Of those still left."

The nobles toiled to load,
And carry off, this treasure. Then appeared
A dragon-flag ; the world turned violet.
Behind the flag rode brave Bahrám Chúbína,
Who robbed the world of lustre in the fray.
He and Khusrau Parwíz encountered, both
Redoubted warriors and savage lions.
Like elephants of war they raged and smote
Each other on the head. All lion-like
Bahrám Chúbína wheeled, his weapons failed
Against the foe, and thus till set of sun
The conflict passed all bounds. Then came Tukhár
To tell Khusrau Parwíz that he had drawn
The treasure and the baggage to the bridge,
Whereat the monarch said to Gustaham :—
" We have not any helpers in the fight ;
We are but ten ; this is a mighty host,
And led on by a valiant paladin.
Although we have the Grace upon our side
We lack for friends, so flee we. Timely flight
Is better than affray. I may not tarry,
For I am all alone."

The unpractised youth
Fared till he reached the bridge of Nahrawán,
Pursued all hotly by Bahrám Chúbína,
His head all vengeance and his heart all strife.
Khusrau Parwíz, when he perceived this, stopped

Upon the bridge and summoned to his presence
 The veteran Gustaham. "Bring me my bow,"
 He said; "'tis mine interpreter in war."

The treasurer, who was Gustaham himself,
 Produced the bow.¹ The valiant chieftain took it,
 And robbed the air of lustre with his shafts,
 Showered them like hail and pegged with each a
 helm

C. 1890

And head together. Then Bahrám Chúbína,
 That Lion, charged with lasso in his hand
 And Dragon under him. With lasso only
 He passed behind Khusrau Parwíz who saw,
 Rejoiced, strung up his bow and with a shaft
 Struck on the breast Bahrám Chúbína's horse;
 Its task was done. That general afoot
 Despairing took his buckler while Yalán-sína
 Advanced like dust and charged. The atheling,
 Who knew him valiant, aimed and hurt his steed.
 Yalán-sína fled from the bridge afoot,
 And with him fled the rest, both old and young.
 Now when Bahrám Chúbína thus withdrew
 Khusrau Parwíz, swift as a dust-cloud, broke
 The bridge and went to Taisafún in dudgeon,
 With pain at heart and eyes fulfilled with blood.
 He barred the city-gates with iron bars,
 Sat down amid a multitude of cares,
 From every quarter called to him the Great,
 And posted sentinels at every gate.

¹ "Son trésorier le lui apporta, et Gustehem était en cette affaire le lieutenant du roi." Mohl.

§ 8

*How Khusrav Parwiz went to his Sire and fled to Rúm,
and how Hurmuzd was slain*

Thence weeping blood and liver-pierced he went
Before his sire, gave greeting, tarried long,
And said : “ The cavalier, the paladin,
Whom thou didst choose, O king ! came as do Sháhs
That have the Grace and brought a numerous host.
I counselled him but 'twas of no avail,
He only cared for war and conflict. Never
Be his name current ! All against my will
Was fought a great fight, and the stars brought scath
On many. All my troops deserted me ;
Thou wouldest have said they saw and passed me by,
And, not reflecting, hailed Bahrám Chúbína
As Sháh. Pursuing me he led his troops,
As 'twere a moving mountain, to the bridge
Of Nahrawán, and I, when mine estate
No longer flourished, fled and scaped the net
Of bale. As I account of gain and loss
The Arabs only may prove serviceable,
And, if the king bid, I will bring their horsemen
In countless numbers.”

C. 1891

“ This is ill-advised,”
Replied Hurmuzd, “ for now thou hast no standing.
To go to them is labour lost, for we
Possess not men, or arbalists or treasure.
The Arabs will not help when there is naught
To gain or lose but in despite and dudgeon
Will sell thee to thy foes, yet God will aid,
And smiling fortune side with thee. If thou
Wouldst quit this land depart with speed for Rúm,
And tell to Cæsar what this slave in straits

Hath said. He will assist thee with his treasure
 And troops. In that land are both men and stores,
 And arms and host arrayed. Moreover all
 That spring from Farídún are kin to thee,
 And will assist thee in thy need.”

Thereat

Khusráu Parwíz kissed earth and gave the praises
 Due to the Great. Then to Bandwí, Gurdwí,
 And Gustaham he said : “ We must consort
 With grief and toil. Take order, pack, and yield
 Our country to the foe.”

Said Gustaham :—

“ Ne’er mayst thou see ill hap, O king ! ”

He answered :—

“ The circling heaven produceth wrath and love
 By turns.”

With that the watchman cried : “ O Sháh,
 Just and auspicious ! from the road hath risen
 Dark dust. Amid a host a standard waveth
 Charged with a dragon, and Bahrám Chúbína
 Raised it beside the Nahrawán.”

Thereat

Khusráu Parwíz gat on his steed like smoke,
 And fled like flying dust with that blue banner
 Behind him. Turning him about he saw
 Bandwí and Gustaham proceeding slowly,
 And shouted to them in an angry tone :—
 “ O villains ! what hath happened that yon foes
 Become like friends to you ? If ’tis not so
 Why ride at leisure with Bahrám Chúbína
 Hard on your backs ? ”

Bandwí replied : “ O king !

Be not concerned at him ; he will not see
 Our dust, the host’s flag is too far away.
 Thy friends all say there is no cause for haste
 Because Bahrám Chúbína, when he reacheth

C. 1892

The palace, will at once give to Hurmuzd
 The crown and throne, will sit as minister
 Beside him, and will angle to some purpose
 By writing from his sovereign to Cæsar
 To this effect : ‘ A worthless slave hath fled
 This country ; let him not obtain asylum
 In Rûm. Each time that he hath raised himself
 He hath done hurt and damage to your land.
 When he arriveth put him into bonds,
 And fill with trouble his rejoicing heart.
 Return him to this court and tarry not
 Until he have grown great,’ and they will bind him,
 And send him back in tears and strongly guarded.”

Khusrau Parwiz heard this with troubled heart,
 His cheek gloomed at their words and he replied :—
 “ Ill-fortune well may treat us thus, but words
 Are long and deeds are strong ; trust we in God.”

He urged his steed and said : “ What good and bad
 The World-lord hath writ o'er our heads will come,
 No musing can avert it. May our foes
 Ne'er have their will.”

When he had gone the two
 Unjust ones turned back eager for revenge.
 Arrived, they sought the palace of the Shâh,
 All dudgeon and with hearts prepared for crime.
 When they had passed the gate and reached the throne
 They straightway took the string from off a bow,
 Flung it forthwith around the monarch's neck,
 And hung his honoured person. Passed that crown
 And throne of king of kings : thou wouldest have
 said :—

“ Hurmuzd was never in the world at all.”

The custom of revolving time it is

To furnish sometimes sweets and sometimes bane ;
 Seek not for profit from a stock like this
 Because the quest will bring thee naught but pain.

When thus Hurmuzd's days ended and the throne,
 That happy seat, remained unfilled, forthwith
 Arose a sound of drums ; those murderers' cheeks
 Became like sandarac. Upon the road
 Bahrám Chúbína's standard came in sight
 Amid his troops, and that outrageous pair—
 Bandwí and Gustaham—fled from the palace,
 And hasted till they reached Khusráu Parwíz,
 Who, seeing their wan looks, knew that their hearts
 Contained some secret, else would they have quitted
 The master of the world ? His cheeks became
 Like flowers of fenugreek but he revealed
 Naught to that savage pair. He bade his troops :—
 “ Turn from the highway for a host approacheth.
 Take the long route across the unwatered plain,
 And let your bodies grow inured to pain.”

C. 1893

§ 9

How Bahrám Chúbína sent Troops after Khusráu Parwíz and how Bandwí contrived to rescue him from their Hands

On entering the palace of the Sháh
 Bahrám Chúbína chose from his fierce host
 Six thousand wielders of the scimitar,
 Mailed, to pursue the king, and put Bahrám,
 The son of Siyáwush, in charge of those
 Famed, warlike troops, while on the other part
 Khusráu Parwíz took to the waste to 'scape
 His foes with life, and reached at length a hold
 With battlements of viewless height. Folk called it
 “ The House of God ”—a shrine, a blessed spot,
 With bishops and a metropolitan,

A place for penitents. He there addressed
A holy man : " What food is there to hand ? "

A bishop said : " There are unleavened loaves
And watercress, my lord ! If such thou needest
Let it be none save ours."

The king forthwith
Alighted with his escort. That aspirant
With his two courtiers took in hand for prayer
The sacred twigs, then on the soft, blue¹ sand
They sat and ate in haste of what there was.
Thereafter he addressed the bishop thus :
" Hast thou no wine, old sir whose steps are blest ? "

He said : " We manufacture wine from dates ;
We make it in the heat of summer-time.
There is a little left, clear as rose-water,
And red as coral in the sun."

Forthwith
He brought a cup thereof and it eclipsed
The hue of Sol. Khusrau Parwíz drank three,
Partook of barley-bread and, when his wits
Were warmed with ruddy wine, slept with his head
Laid on Bandwí's lap on the yielding sand,
All sorrowful of soul and liver-pierced.
Just as he slept the senior bishop came.
" Black dust-clouds have arisen on the road,"
He said ; " behind them is a mighty host."

Khusrau Parwíz replied : " It is bad luck
That foes should seek us just as men and steeds
Are spent. The inevitable day hath come."

Then spake Bandwí the good at need : " Yon chief
Approacheth."

Said Khusrau Parwíz : " Good friend !
Direct us in the matter."

He rejoined :—
" I will devise escape for thee, O king !

¹ For the sake of the rhyme, probably.

In this strait, though I shall have sacrificed
My life to save the monarch of the world."

Khusráu Parwíz replied : "A sage of Chín
Hath uttered better things in this regard :—
'In Paradise shall be his future state
Who here hath tilled about a monarch's gate.
The plastering can not abide in place
When city-walls are levelled to their base.
When mighty cities perish out of hand.
Let not the hospitals be left to stand.'
If shift thou knowest use it ; holy God
Will save thee from the need of 'other help.'"

Bandwí said : "Let me have the crown of gold,
The earrings, girdle, and the robe from Chín,
Gold-woven and tulip-hued, and while I don them
Abide not thou. Go with thy troops apace
As sailors speed a vessel o'er the deep."

The youth did as Bandwí advised and thence
Companioned with the wind. When he had made
Shift thus to flee, Bandwí, the veteran,
Turned to the bishop, saying : "Ye must tarry
Unseen of all upon the mountain-top,"
Then went himself dust-swift within the shrine,
And with all speed shut fast the iron door,
Assumed the gold-embroidered robe and donned
The royal crown. He went upon the roof,
And thence unwillingly beheld a host
On every side. He waited till they came
Up to the hold to fight. At sight of him
With gold crown, earrings, torque, and belt all cried :—
It is Khusráu Parwíz with his new crown
And robes."

Bandwí, when certain that the troops
Had taken him to be the Sháh himself,
Went from the roof, donned his own clothes with
speed,

Then fearlessly returned and said : “ Young braves !
 To whom shall I address me as your chief
 Because I have a message from the Sháh
 To give in presence of the mighty men ? ”

C. 1895

The son of Siyáwush, on hearing this,
 Said : “ I am chief and I am hight Bahrám.”

Bandwí replied : “ The world-lord saith : ‘ My
 journey
 Hath much distressed me ; all our beasts are sore,
 Foundered and all amort with lengthy travel.
 I reached this house of penitents for rest,
 But will at day-break give up worldly hopes,
 And take with you the longsome road that leadeth
 To great Bahrám Chúbína, and herein
 I do not seek delay that heaven perchance
 May succour me. Mine ancestors were wont
 To keep the laws of honour and good faith,
 And through their long and fortunate careers
 They ne’er refused when subjects asked a boon.
 So now that fortune is my foe I make
 An open breast to you, for from bright Sol
 To darksome dust the will of God is done.’ ”

The chief agreed and every one that heard
 The Sháh’s words grieved for him. The troopers all
 Dismounted and kept guard on him that night.

Next day Bandwí went to the roof upon
 The side that faced Bahrám and said : “ The Sháh
 Is praying and will do naught else to-day.
 He spent last night in prayer. Besides, the sun
 Is high, he must not suffer from the heat.
 Leave him in peace to-day. At dawn to-morrow
 He shall surrender.”

“ This may prove a trifle,”
 Bahrám said to his chiefs, “ or else of moment.
 If we shall press him much he may be wroth
 And fall on us. He is a host himself,

A world-aspirant, shrewd and valorous.
 If he be slain in fight Bahrám Chúbína
 Will send too dust from us. 'Tis best to wait
 To-day, although our stores are running low,
 To see if he will yield without contention."

Thus was it till the night rose o'er the mountains,
 And her host gathered, then both far and wide
 The troops spread, kindling fires on every side.

§ 10

*How Bahrám, the Son of Siyáwush, took Bandwí and
 carried him to Bahrám Chúbína*

When earth grew sun-hued eloquent Bandwí
 Went to the roof and thus addressed Bahrám :—
 “ Experienced one ! when dust rose from the plain
 Khusrau Parwíz at sight of you departed,
 He and his troops, in haste toward Rúm, and now,
 Wert thou to wing it eagle-like and soar
 Above the sun, thou wouldest not spy the Sháh
 Unless in Rúm where he hath aged by now ;
 But if ye grant me quarter I will come
 Forth to thy valiant chief and I will answer
 All questions asked of me about ourselves,
 But if not I will arm and send the dust
 In combat to the sun.”

C. 1896

The youth's heart aged
 With grief when he heard this. “ What will it profit,”
 He asked his comrades, “ if I send the reek
 Up from Bandwí ? The better course will be
 To take him as he is with mind unclouded
 Before the paladin to tell whatever
 He knoweth of the Sháh and either lose

His head or keep his crown.'

Then to Bandwí :—

" Discuss this question with Bahrám Chúbína,
Thou evil schemer ! "

Then Bandwí, the Lion,
Came down and went back with the valiant chiefs.
Bahrám Chúbína heard of their return,
And that Khusrau Parwíz bent on revenge
Had gone to Rúm, and vehemently raged
Against the son of Siyáwush, exclaiming :—
" Thou luckless miscreant ! thou hast disobeyed.
Fool that I am ! I have approved a fool ! "

He summoned next Bandwí, the ambitious one,
And turned the wrath on him : " Thou miscreant
knavé !

Blame-worthy liar who hast been so foolish
As thus to gull my troops ! Thou couldst not rest
Through thine ill nature and hast now become
One with accursed Khusrau Parwíz, hast made
A youth a veteran and hast come to boast :—
' I will renew this outworn age.' "

Bandwí

Replied : " Exalted chief ! look but for right
From me and be not fierce. Know that the king
Of kings is of my kin, his majesty
And greatness are mine own, and I have given,
As was my duty, mine own life for his.
If thou'rt a chieftain act straightforwardly."

C. 1897

Bahrám Chúbína said : " I would not slay thee
For this thy fault. Howbeit thou wilt perish
By his hand soon and know that I speak sooth."

They gyved Bandwí's feet, and Bahrám Chúbína
Consigned him to the son of Siyáwush
To keep him scathless, stayed till sunset there,
Then sought his own couch with a heart all care."

§ 11

*How Bahrám Chúbína summoned the Magnates of Írán,
how they discussed his Pretensions to the Kingship,
and how he acceded to the Throne*

When Sol unsheathed its sword, and when its veil
Of yellow showed, Bahrám Chúbína sent
And called the magnates, seating them upon
The dais of the kings on golden seats,
Which he had ranged around, and sat in joy
As conquering monarchs do. Thereafter he
Spake with a mighty utterance thus and said :—
“ Ye that are worshipful ! now make response
In full assurance and auspiciously
Advise upon my words. Give them all heed,
And note my prompt dispatch. Ye will not find
A worse Sháh than Zahhák, search as ye may,
Who slew his sire for kingship’s sake, whereby
Írán fell to his hands ;¹ and now again
Khusráu Parwíz, a man unjust and cursed,
Hath slain his father and hath gone to Rúm ;
And so till one of royal race appeareth,
One fit to claim the throne and make crown, girdle,
And fortune his who, think ye, is the man
To gird him at this present to restore
The precedents of kings ? I swear by Him,
Who is the Master of the sun on high,
That I will give you aidance in the quest.”

The nobles heard the famous chieftain’s words,
And none dissented. Then an elder rose—
Sháhrán Guráz, a hoary warrior,
A chieftain eminent—and answered thus :—
“ Thou art a benefactor to the world,

¹ See Vol. i. pp. 136, 139.

C. 1898

Illustrious prince ! Hadst thou not been at Rai
 No one had matched king Sáwa when he reached
 Our coast with forces to enslave the Free ;
 But bravely thou didst arm thee and that trouble
 Passed from the Iránians, and a host equipped,
 And warriors all, four hundred thousand strong,
 Fled from thy wooden shaft, and thus Irán
 Had rest from heat and strife ; so now its throne
 Befitteth thee as thine unsleeping fortune
 Is witness. Him that disobeyeth thee,
 Or shunneth thine alliance, will we cause
 To do thy will, brave though he be, and though
 The matter touch Khusrau Parwíz himself."

Thus spake he and resumed his seat, whereat
 The chieftain Khurásán stood forth before
 Bahrám Chúbína and thus spake : " I ask
 This old, ambitious sage, who hath harangued
 The assembly at such length, who hath inspired
 His words ? He praised thee so that all our hearts
 Rejoiced, and yet there is a goodly saying
 Used in the Zandavasta by Zarduhsh
 For honest brains to hear : ' Whoe'er shall quit
 The Almighty's way, admonish such one year,
 Supplying all his needs, and after that
 If he return not slay him with the sword
 By order of the Sháh, while if he be
 The just Sháh's foeman let him be beheaded
 Forthwith. ' "

He spake, ceased, and resumed his seat.
 Then Farrukhzád stood up. " O helpful chief ! "
 He said, " just speech is better than mishap.
 If justice then is better perish he
 That joyeth in unjust words."

Then he spake
 Thus to Bahrám Chúbína : " Blest be thou,
 And may the sight of thee sustain the world.

If these my words find favour and if God,
 The Conqueror, assist us live for ever
 As our blest Sháh, and be the hands and tongues
 Of bad men far from thee."

That valiant man

Sat down and Khazarwán, son of Khusrau,
 Came forward lion-like and said : " Although
 Both young and old talk much yet in the end,
 If thou wouldest follow right, dispatch like wind
 A cameleer and tarry not until
 Khusrau Parwíz, the exalted one, shall tread
 The longsome road a victim to injustice.
 Excuse thy late behaviour and approach not
 The throne thus boldly, for no general
 Is worthy of it while the world-lord liveth.
 If thou art fearful of Khusrau Parwíz
 Break off thy love for Párs and Taisafún,
 And live in ease and power in Khurásán.
 Write letter after letter of excuse ;
 Perchance Khusrau Parwíz may prove amene."

C. 1899

When he withdrew stepped forward Zád Farrukh,
 And said with justice : " Chiefs of noble race !
 I have been listening to this debate
 Of these the chosen leaders of Irán.
 First, that proposal worthy of a slave
 To make a paladin the Sháh is one
 Distasteful to the wise, one to diminish
 A man's renown. The words of Khurásán
 Were grand and wedded, I maintain, to wisdom,
 While those of Farrukhzád were violent,
 Such as would hebetate the hearts of sages.
 The fourth to speak was Khazarwán, the chief,
 Whose words were also wise, for since God made
 The world the course of time is manifest.
 Start from Zahhák, the Arab, who was both
 Unjust and foul of Faith. He slew Jamshíd,

That overweening one, and seized the world
 Unjustly. Holy men grieved that a dív
 Was Sháh till Farídún, that glorious king,
 Abated him. Next came that miscreant,
 Afrásiyáb, who for that purpose left
 Túrán and crossing o'er the stream beheaded
 Naudar, the noble, with the scimitar
 In piteous fashion and o'erturned the state ;
 And, third, Sikandar who from Rúm invaded
 Írán, laid waste our land, and slew Dárá,
 The swordsman, so that food and slumber grew
 Harsh to the Írániens, while, fourthly, came
 Foul Khúshnawáz who robbed our fields and fells
 Of mirth and joy when unexpectedly
 The Haitálians slew Pírúz, a Sháh high-starred,
 The conqueror of the world, the chief of rulers,
 And overturned the throne of king of kings.
 But none hath seen a wonder such as lately
 Came on Frán when Sháh Khusrau Parwíz
 Fled from the throne, from his own troops, to
 foes ! ”

C. 1900

This said, he sat and wept. Bahrám Chúbína
 Turned livid at the words. The veteran
 Sambáz, loin-girt, with Indian sword in hand,
 Leapt to his feet. “ This noble paladin,”
 He said, “ is great, just, ardent, so till one
 Of royal race shall come and gird his loins
 'Tis best for him to sit upon the throne,
 For he is warlike, brave, and fortunate.”

Bahrám Chúbína, chief of warriors,
 Heard, clapped his hand upon his sword and drew it,
 Exclaiming : “ If we find within this quarter
 A woman of the lineage of the Sháhs
 I will behead her with the trenchant sword,
 And let the breath of death pass over her.¹

¹ Couplet inserted from P.

I will not wait for one to claim the realm,
And caracole amidst the cavaliers."

Whenas the chiefs possessed by Áhri man¹
Heard their foul leader thus assert himself
They drew their scimitars, arose, and spake
In terms unheard till then : " Bahrám Chúbína
Is Sháh and we are subjects. We will not
Transgress his wishes and commands."

Now when

Bahrám Chúbína saw the scimitars
Drawn he díd what was just and right, and said :—
" If any one shall leave his seat and touch
His scimitar I will cut off his hand
Forthwith and sober him."

This said, he left
The nobles for the pleasance. That great conclave
Dispersed with faces lined and broken hearts.

Whenas the pitch-hued, star-illumined Veil
Appeared, and watchmen's calls were heard, he asked
For pen and paper, and a noble scribe,
And wise, approached, to whom he handed pen
And inkstand, saying : " Write out on this silk
This declaration from the Íráni ans :—²
‘ Bahrám Chúbína is the Sháh, triumphant,
Deserving crown, adorning throne, and seeking
Right publicly and privily.’ ”

This written

They lighted links and passed an anxious night,
But when the Veil of lapis-lazuli
Had passed away and when the world was sun-gilt,
One fortune-favoured came and set a state
Within the palace of Bahrám Chúbína ;
Upon that golden state they placed a seat,
And oped the court. He took his place as Sháh,

¹ Reading with P.

² Thus imitating the impious Zahhák. See Vol. i. p. 154.

And donned the royal crown. The scribe then brought
 The declaration of his sovereignty
 Inscribed upon the costly painted silk,
 And each chief testified : “ Bahrám Chúbína
 Is monarch of the world.”

When they had signed
 He sealed it with his golden seal and said :—
 “ All-holy God will testify to you
 That now this realm is mine and may its kings
 Be of my lineage for a thousand years,
 And thus ennobled hold in line direct
 The crown and lofty throne.”

C. 1901

’Twas on the day
 Khurshíd of month Ázar that thus the Lion
 Gave up the Onager’s back.¹ Bahrám Chúbína
 Thereafter thus harangued the Írániāns :—
 “ Revengeful strife hath risen in our midst.
 Whoe’er accepteth not this settlement,
 Be he an honest man or not, shall spend
 But three days in Írán and on the fourth,
 What time the world’s Light mounteth to the sky,
 Shall go to join Khusrau Parwíz and sleep not
 In our dominions longer.”

Blessing him,
 Not from their hearts, men said : “ May earth ne’er
 lack thee.”

Heart-broken that Bahrám Chúbína reigned
 Those loyal to the kingdom’s rightful lord
 Departed Rúm-ward and dispersed abroad.

¹ Mohl has “ lorsque le lion dévore le dos de l’onagre.” It may mean “ When the country (the onager) lost its natural tyrant the lion (Khusrau Parwíz) by the accession of Bahrám Chúbína.”

§ 12

*How Bandwí plotted with Bahrám, the Son of Siyáwush,
to slay Bahrám Chúbína, and how Bandwí fled from
Bond*

For seventy days Bandwí, like cheetah bound,
Was in the prison of Bahrám Chúbína,
Watched by Bahrám, the son of Siyáwush—
A most unwilling jailor—whom Bandwí,
Still scheming though in bondage, thus beguiled :—
“Despair not of the monarch of Írán ;
Though night be dark 'twill turn to day and though
His fortune, like the fortune of Pírúz
With Khúshnawáz, shall tarry long. The Maker
Restored him in the person of Kubád,¹
And gave him back the world. Bahrám Chúbína
In like wise will retain not crown and throne.
Doth he himself, this man of fortune, think it ?
Nay, perish any rustic who thus giveth
Himself in folly to the wind. Count thou
Two months upon thy fingers and thou'l see
Troops from Írán in Rúm, and they will cast
Fire on this crown and throne, and break the jewels
On this man's head.”

Bahrám said : “ If the king
Will grant me quarter I will deck my soul
With thine advice and do thy will in all,
But I must have a great oath sworn to me
By moon, Ázargashasp, by throne and crown,
That if Khusrau Parwíz come to our coasts,
And bring a host from Cæsar and from Rúm,
Thou wilt ask him to spare my life, not slight
What so importeth me, lest he be led

C. 1902

¹ Kaikubád in the original.

By what the Íránians say and harm befall me.”

He spake, then calling for the Zandavasta
 He caused Bandwí to swear, who took the roll,
 And said : “ Let not Bandwí see aught but pain
 And toil from the Supreme or e'er find rest
 Within this Wayside Hostelry if I
 Do otherwise. Else when Khusrau Parwíz
 Bestir himself I will not look on him,
 Or ever rest, unless he send to thee
 Withal a signet and a chieftain’s crown.”

Bahrám, on hearing what an oath he swore,
 And seeing his pure heart and loyalty,
 Said : “ I will tell thee all my schemes aloud.
 I will achieve revenge and set a snare
 To catch Bahrám Chúbína. Where I set it
 There will I do mine utmost to destroy him
 With bane of scimitar. Our streams are dry
 Since we have had to hail him as the Sháh.”

Bandwí replied : “ Know, O experienced man !
 That I am shrewd and prompt and wise, and when
 Khusrau Parwíz returneth with a host
 From Rúm, and sitteth on the state, thou’lt find
 That he will not refuse me anything.
 I will ask pardon for thy past offence,
 And he would give his crown at my request.
 If thou wilt keep thy word and not ensue
 Guile in thy heart unfetter me and thus
 Begin to recognise Khusrau Parwíz ;
 ’Twill prove thy secret bent ; that plain appeal
 Will reach his ear.”

Thereat Bahrám’s face brightened,
 And he removed the fetters.

When night’s veil,
 Musk-hued, turned bright and dawn laid hand thereon
 Bahrám said to Bandwí : “ If my heart fail not,
 What time Bahrám Chúbína playeth polo

To-day I have engaged me with five friends
To slay him."

Calling for a coat of mail

He donned it 'neath his dress and rode away.
Bahrám, the warrior, had a wicked wife
Who wished him hewn to pieces. In her heart
She was enamoured of Bahrám Chúbína,
While hatred of her husband filled her soul ;
So to Bahrám Chúbína she dispatched
Some one to say : " O thou that succourest !
Protect thyself because Bahrám hath donned
His mail beneath his robe and buckled it.
I know not what may be his ill intent,
But thou hadst better keep aloof from him."

C. 1903

Bahrám Chúbína, hearing her advice
Not to play polo with her spouse, tapped all
Who came upon the ground with polo-sticks,
And drew anear him, gently on the back
With kindly greetings in a pleasant tone
Until he reached the son of Siyáwush,
Found him to be in mail and said : " O thou
Worse than a biting snake ! who weareth mail
Beneath his silk upon the polo-ground ? "

This said, he drew his vengeful scimitar,
And clave the son of Siyáwush in two.
'Twas bruited in the city that Bahrám
Was slain, and when the tidings reached Bandví
The daylight failed him. Putting on his mail
He mounted, quaking girt his warlike loins,
And taking all the kinsmen of Bahrám,
With all that looked for safety to himself,
Fled from the city and the Day of Doom.
When they had gone one stage their numbers grew ;
They pressed along the road to Ardabil.

Bahrám Chúbína, when he left the ground,
Trailed in his wrath his robe in blood, then ordered

Mahrwí to guard Bandwí. The people said :—
 “ Fret not for him, O king ! for when he heard
 News of this slaying verily he took
 The wind for waymate, knowing that the matter
 Concerned himself and that Bahrám was slain
 For their intrigue. He sorrowed to have caused
 His comrade’s death and saw the outlook dark.”

The king said : “ May he lack both skin and brain
 That knoweth not foe from friend. One will repose
 Upon the points of elephants’ tusks, another
 Trust to the billows of the dark blue sea ;
 A third will brave a monarch’s wrath, a fourth
 Take lion by the foreleg. Let thy soul
 Feel for all four ; their fortune is averse.
 Another would move mountains and inviteth
 All to his aid. He wearieh himself,
 And as the outcome clutcheth but the wind.
 To voyage in a ship unseaworthy
 Is better than to be precipitate,
 And if thou seekest and dost find a spring
 Wilt thou grow daft and turn therefrom in wrath ?
 The man whose guide is blind will tarry long
 Upon his way. The handler of a dragon
 Would die, the dragon ’scape, while pain and death
 Are his who eateth bane for trial’s sake,
 And yet I did not slay Bandwí at first,
 So he hath schemed and hath escaped my hands !
 My act is one for which I needs must weep,
 And see what is God’s will.”¹

Bandwí the while
 With his small band sped on like rushing wind.
 Each carried with him what he could toward where
 Mausíl, the Armenian, dwelt along a road
 Infested by wild beasts and waterless.

¹ The import of the speech is : “ There are many sorts of fools but I am the greatest of them all.”

Bandwí perceived a camp-enclosure pitched,
 Saw that it was Mausíl's, found streams and food,
 And hurried forward to that fertile spot
 Alone, beheld Mausíl, did him obeisance,
 And told him privily the case, who said :—
 “ Stay here, for here the latest news will reach thee
 Of what Khusrau Parwíz doth in fair Rúm,
 And if he contempleteth peace or war.”

Thereat Bandwí was minded to remain,
 And called up his companions from the plain.

§ 13

How Khusrau Parwíz went toward Rúm by the Desert-route and how a Hermit told him of the Past and Future

Khusrau Parwíz led on in haste where guide,
 And grass and water, were not. Slack of rein
 They went in dudgeon till they reached Bábil,
 Where all the well-disposed among the chiefs
 Went forth to welcome him. As he drew near
 He made his men dismount outside the city,
 And scarce had done so when a courier came
 Out of Írán in haste. He bore a letter
 Concealed upon him from Bahrám Chúbína,
 And written to the ruler of Bábil :—
 “ Detain a company if one shall come ;
 My troops pursue and will arrive anon.”

The ruler, seeing the letter's purport, sought
 Khusrau Parwíz in haste, who looked and read,
 Astounded at the process of the world.
 He feared pursuit and mourned his own fatigue,
 But mounting presently departed thence,
 And girding up his royal loins pressed on

Until he came to the Farát ; no rest
 Saw he in his own realm. His followers,
 Both old and young, were famished. Then they spied
 A wood and water while a caravan
 Of camels led on by a cameleer
 Appeared anon. That youth, when he beheld
 Khusrau Parwíz, called blessings down upon
 That noble one, who asked : “ What is thy name ?
 What is thy trade and whither goest thou ? ”

He answered : “ Kais am I, son of Hárís,
 And heir of Arab chiefs. From Misr have I
 Come with a caravan and am myself
 Chief cameleer. I dwell beside the waters
 Of the Farát and came thence to this forest.”

Khusrau Parwíz asked : “ What hast thou of food
 And stuffs, for we are wearied out and famished,
 Not having food or packs ? ”

The Arab said :—
 “ Stay ; I am one with thee, share, soul, and body.”

In his affection for the Sháh he brought
 A fatted cow ; they slaughtered her and lit
 A fire by kindling sticks both green and dry.
 He grilled kabáb ; the comrades of the Sháh
 Were eager to partake, consuming much,
 But had no bread. Each chieftain then made ready
 A sleeping-place. They slept awhile, then rose
 And offered up their orisons anew
 To that just Judge who made the world, made mighty
 And weak alike, and then the Sháh addressed
 His comrades thus : “ The most in fault are they
 That are my noblest and most famous subjects :
 Still those that have done worst, rebelled, and left
 God’s way, may trust with confidence to me.
 See that ye give to them the fairest hopes.”

His comrades blessed him, saying : “ O thou pure
 Of heart and Faith ! bright be thy heart and jocund

Thy lot, and may the just Judge give thee back
 The throne. He hath bestowed on thee such Grace
 And mien that love and justice are increased
 For every one : thou art the sum of wisdom,
 For thou replacest ill by good.”

The Sháh,

Though pleased at this acclaim, was in his heart
 Concerned about his route and asked the Arab :—
 “ What is it like ? How shall I fare with troops ? ”

He answered : “ Seventy farsangs and more
 Of waste and mountain front you. With thy leave
 I will find meat and water for the road
 If thou wilt hurry not.”

C. 1906

Khusrau Parwíz

Replied : “ There is no other course, for this
 Will furnish provand and a guide.”

The Aráb

Dispatched a cameleer to fare before
 The troops. He hurried over waste and mountain,
 All care and travail, with that company.
 Withal afar another caravan

Appeared upon the route before the troops.
 A wealthy merchant sought the king, who asked :—
 “ Say, whence art thou and whither hastening ? ”

He said : “ I am a merchant and a scribe,
 And I have come from Khurra-i-Ardshír.”

“ How did thy father name thee ? ” said the Sháh.
 The merchantman replied : “ Míhrán Sitád.”

The king requested of the man supplies
 Because the leader of his troops had said :—
 “ He hath, O Sháh ! provisions past compute,
 But may not be best pleased.”

“ To find a host
 Upon the way is so much to the good,”
 The Sháh replied. The merchant loosed his bales
 Of cheap and costly wares, brought provand forth,

And sat himself upon the ground, invoking
 A blessing on the king. The eating done,
 The hospitable merchant brought the Sháh
 The water for his hands, but when Kharrád,
 Son of Barzín, saw that he rose, ran up,
 Took the warm water from the merchant's hand,
 That no respect toward the Sháh might fail,
 And when the merchantman made haste to bring
 Wine lucent as rose-water then again
 Kharrád, son of Barzín, took from his hand
 The goblet and presented it himself.
 In due observance servants profit find,
 For all such service is repaid in kind.

“ Which is the army's route,” the Sháh then asked
 The merchant, “ and, O hospitable man !
 Where dwellest thou in Khurra-i-Ardshír ? ”

He said : “ O Sháh ! live in prosperity.
 I of these traffickers am from Káraz.”¹

The Sháh enjoined Rúzbih, the scribe, to note
 The young man's name and village. “ Go thy ways,
 And be at heart the warp and woof of wisdom,”
 He said. The army left that verdant spot,
 And hurrying toward the Rúman marches reached
 The town which Cæsar named Kársán. The Christians,

C. 1907 On seeing the troops afar, went hurrying
 Across the waste to carry their effects
 Within the walls and firmly barred the gates.
 The Sháh, the lustre of the world, chagrined
 Remained outside for three days with his troops,
 And on the fourth dispatched a man to say :—
 “ Our troops are few, send provand, succour us,
 And treat us not in this high-handed wise.”

They scorned his words, his troops were weak and
 famished,

¹ “ Je suis le courtier des marchands.” Mohl.

When suddenly there rose a murky cloud,
 Which roared like some great warrior-lion ; a storm
 Swept o'er the place ; from every quarter came
 Din and a cry for help. By midnight half
 The walls had gone ; the town was all amaze ;
 The bishop offered prayers ; in every quarter
 They gathered food together, and three priests,
 Three venerable men, went forth in haste
 With native produce and with Rúman robes,
 And brought a led horse to the Sháh. They said :—
 “ Our fault, O Sháh ! is manifest to us,”
 And he, a noble youth, reproached them not.

There was within the city's walls a palace,
 Whose summit was at home among the clouds ;
 'Twas built by Cæsar and had many slaves.
 The Sháh went thither when he left the plain,
 And oft-times used to go about the city.
 The Rúmans all acclaimed him and strewed jewels
 Beneath his feet. Possessed of this fair dwelling
 He rested for a while and wrote to Cæsar
 Of that storm, rain, and darksome cloud, then went
 Toward Mánwí which he renamed Mínú.¹
 The shrewd and wise, the great and powerful,
 Among its citizens, with priests and monks,
 Went to the king with gifts and offerings,
 Spake of the storm and of that ancient town,²
 And all said : “ We are slaves and bow before
 Khusrau Parwíz' behest.”

He stayed three days,
 And on the fourth when Sol, the world's light, rose,
 And thrust its bright sword through the clouds,
 departed
 Toward Warígh ;³ it was a city's name,
 And had the true Cross⁴ and a hospital.

¹ *i.e.* Paradise.

² Spelt also Aurígh.

³ Kársán.

⁴ Cf. Vol. v. p. 306 and *note*.

C. 1908

Upon the waste he saw a hermitage ;
 He heard the hermit's voice, approached, and asked :—
 “ What blessed one is here ? ”

They made reply :—

“ An ancient man grown wan with many years,
 A skilled astrologer ; there is not aught
 Concealed from him, and what he saith will be.”

The Sháh drew nigh the door forthwith and cried :—
 “ Be thine to worship God, and may He bless thee
 If thou wilt come forth from thine ancient cell.”

Forthwith the hermit, when he heard the words,
 Descended from his cell and seeing the Sháh
 Said : “ Of a truth thou art Khusrau Parwíz
 Brought by the hand of an ill-doing slave,
 Impure, Armenian-like, a servitor,
 To this affliction for thy father's throne.”

He spake at large ; Khusrau Parwíz became
 Cheered in his heart through all that kindness,
 And all in wonder at the words invoked
 The blessings of the Maker on the man,
 The devotee, and, mounted, greeted him
 With outstretched hand, whereat the man of God
 Did reverence and spake long. By way of proof
 The Sháh said : “ Of the Iránian host am I,
 A subject, bearing a dispatch to Cæsar,
 And I shall carry to my lord his answer.
 See if my journey will be prosperous,
 And how result.”

He answered : “ Say not so ;
 Thou art the Sháh, make not thyself a courtier.
 I told thee all at sight so never prove me.
 Thy Faith alloweth no falsehood, and deceit
 Is not thy way and wont. Thou hast endured
 Much toil and suffered, and at last hast fled
 Before thy slave.”

Astounded and confused

Khusráu Parwíz began to make excuse.
 The hermit said : “ Forbear, and question me
 Of what will be. As to thy coming hither
 Be glad and confident, and to the world
 A fruitful bough for God will satisfy thee,
 And give to thee high fortune and high place,
 While thou wilt have from Cæsar arms and troops,
 And daughter worthy of the crown of state.
 The World-lord, who ne'er sleepeth, will assist thee
 In battle with thy slaves, while in the end
 The miscreant will flee and oft recall
 The days of his success. He will alight
 Far from that field of battle and there dwell ;
 Yet still, though rather than submit to thee
 He will choose exile, they will shed his blood
 At thy behest.”

C. 1909

Khusráu Parwíz replied :—

“ God grant it, ancient sage ! but tell me this :
 Will it be long ere I obtain the kingship ? ”

He said : “ Twelve months and thou wilt have the
 throne,
 Then fifteen days and thou wilt light the world
 As king of kings.”

“ Who of this company,”
 The Sháh inquired, “ will bear most toil and care
 On mine account ? ”

The hermit said : “ Bistám,¹
 A lofty spirit and a prosperous,
 And thy maternal uncle who, thou knowest,
 Hath made thy lifetime pleasant ; but be ware
 Of that unprofitable man, the source
 Of all thy plaints, affliction, and mishap.”

The Sháh was wrth and said to Gustaham :—
 “ Thy name revealeth thee ! Thy mother called thee

¹ The Arabic form of Gustaham. He was no true Persian and therefore not to be trusted.

Bistám but thou proclaimest in the fight
Thyself a Gustaham ! ”

Then to the hermit :—

“ This is mine uncle on my mother’s side.”

The hermit answered : “ Yea, it is the same ;
Thou wilt see pain and strife through Gustaham.”

“ And after,” said the Sháh, “ what will ensue,
My counsellor ? ”

He answered : “ Heed not that,
For thenceforth thou wilt have but praise ; no ill
E’er will befall thee, and if hardship cometh
’Twill be from God. This rebel will disturb
Thy peace, but after thou wilt be content,
And, bad as this malicious one may prove,
His fate is in thy hands.”

“ Be not concerned
Hereat, O king ! ” said Gustaham. “ By God,
The Holy One, the Maker of the moon,
Who made a Sháh like thee to rule the world ;
By sun, by moon, and by Ázargashasp,
And by the life and head of our famed Sháh,
While Gustaham shall live he shall not seek
Aught but the right or knock at evil’s door ;
And if he should be minded otherwise
Then may the soul of Gustaham depart.
No human being since the World-lord made
The world hath looked upon His secret’s key ;
Why shouldst thou credit then a Christian’s words,
And heed his idle talk ? Suspect me not
Through speech of his, and seek not for a pretext
Against me now that I have sworn to thee.”

Khusrau Parwíz made answer : “ Holy men
Speak to the point. Withal I have not seen
Ill from thee ever, and thou catchest not
At guile or folly, yet high heaven’s process
May make thee harmful and no wonder too,

For when God willeth wit and wisdom swerve.”

Then said he to the hermit : “ Be thou glad
In heart and prosperous.”

From that hermitage

He went like levin flashing from a cloud
Toward the city of Warígh, and thence
There met him those of worth and eminence.

§ 14

*How a Cavalier of Cæsar came to Khusrav Parwiz
and how Khusrav Parwiz sent a Letter by Gustaham,
Bálwí, Andiyán, Kharrád, Son of Barzín,
and Shápúr to Cæsar*

When he arrived there came from noble Cæsar
A cavalier to say : “ Ask what thou wilt
Within our coasts and see that thou refrain not
Thy will from kings, for though this realm is mine
I hold thee as mine equal. Stay secure,
And happy in yon city, apprehending
No ill. All Rúmans, haughty though they are
And chiefs, shall serve thee, and I will not seek
Food, sleep or rest till I have furnished thee
With arms and troops.”

The Sháh heard and rejoiced ;
His soul was eased ; he bade call Gustaham,
Bálwí, aspiring Andiyán, Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, and lion Shápúr, and thus
Spake that brave monarch : “ Saddle up at dawn
With golden saddles on the horses led,
Put on your tunics gold-inwoven from Chín,
Be one in heart and honesty, depart,
And parle with Cæsar. Be ye wary, shrewd,

Attentive, bland, and courteous. If he goeth
Upon the Ground for archery or polo
Exert you to the utmost 'gainst his chiefs,
For ye must not be worsted : let him know
That horsemanship proceedeth from Írán,
While from its Lions there come might and valour."

The Sháh then bade Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
" Bring hither silk from Chín and black musk ; I
Must write a letter like resplendent Sol
In jocund Paradise to Cæsar, brief
But to the purpose, such as all men's hearts
May recollect. He hath philosophers ;
Be instant that they hear no foolishness.
They measure not their words in anything ;
Let them not find a fault in our dispatch.
When he hath read the letter loose thy tongue ;
None of them can compete with thee in speech."

Then to Bálwí :¹ " If Cæsar speak of us
In public with regard to an alliance,
Oath, treaty or affinity, reply
As sweet as honey for thou art my tongue
Before that folk and mine interpreter
For good and ill. Endeavour by all means
To save us from defeat ; be diligent ;
Take mine assurances and bear in mind
My words."

Those ardent, veteran warriors
Heard the instructions of that glorious youth,
And blessed him saying : " May none wear the crown
But thou."

They fared with cheerful hearts to Cæsar,
Who when he heard : " Some nobles of Írán,
The envoys of the monarch of the world,
Have reached Yúnán," sent many troops to meet
them.

¹ Reading with P. and below.

He decked a palace with brocade of Rúm,
 The pattern jewelled on a ground of gold,
 And sitting on the famous ivory throne
 Assumed the heart-illuming crown and bade
 Withdraw the curtain and to introduce
 The envoys from the vestibule, rejoicing.
 First came the noble Gustaham, behind
 There were Bálwí and brave Shápúr, Kharrád,
 Son of Barzín, and valiant Andiyán,
 All crowned and girdle-girt. They came anear
 To Cæsar and on seeing did obeisance,
 With one consent called blessings down on him,
 And on that golden throne besprinkled gems.
 He first inquired about the Sháh, Írán,
 The host and toilsome journey. Hearing this,
 Kharrád, son of Barzín, approached the throne,
 And brought the letter of the Sháh. They set,
 By order of that noble sovereign,
 Four golden seats, and of the envoys three,
 Men of illustrious rank and well advised,
 Sat down, but still Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 Stood. Cæsar said : "A traveller should sit."

"The Sháh hath not conferred on me the right,"
 He answered, "in thy presence while I hold
 His letter : mine abasement may commend
 Itself to thee and aid mine embassage."

C. 1912

Said Cæsar : "Speak. What said the prudent
 prince ? "

Kharrád, son of Barzín, what while he spake
 Observing what Khusrau Parwíz had said,
 First praised the Maker and besought His help,
 "Who is above all height, all wise, all mighty,
 Who hath revealed heaven's host and given us
 Soul, wisdom, love. He bade and heaven was,
 For He is over space and time. The sphere
 And stars revolving are His work. When He

Created servants out of worthless dust
 He gave life first to Gaiúmart.¹ The race
 Went on to Farídún whom God most favoured
 Of all those noble chieftains. Once obscure
 His stock became illustrious in the world,
 And lasted up to Kai Kubád who donned
 The crown of majesty. His race ne'er saw
 Calamity and ever kept God's way ;
 But now a worthless slave hath come and sat
 Upon the royal throne. I seek for justice
 Against the unjust, not crown, throne, cap, and
 girdle.

Whoever sitteth on a throne hath need
 Of wisdom, fortune, and nobility.
 This man shall learn to whom the fortune, Grace,
 And diadem of king of kings pertain.
 Help me and quell this traitor for I roam
 Despised by small and great.”

When Cæsar heard
 His cheeks became like bloom of fenugreek ;
 That bloom of fenugreek grew charged with hail,
 And from his tongue and soul there burst a wail.”

§ 15

How Cæsar answered the Letter of Khusráu Parwíz

He read, his grief increased, the throne appeared
 All mournful² to his eyes, and thus that world-lord
 Said to Kharrád, son of Barzín : “ That I
 Esteem Khusráu Parwíz above myself,
 Above my kindred and my fluent soul,
 Is not a secret with discerning men.

¹ See Vol. i. p. 117 *seq.* ² Like lapis-lazuli in the original.

I have arms, troops, and treasure. Now consider
 What ye require. If he will have mine eyes
 I will not say him nay though they are better
 Than wealth, dínárs, and sword."

C. 1913

Then Cæsar summoned

A well-experienced scribe and, seating him
 Upon the royal dais, bade him write
 An answer decked like meads of Paradise
 With many a counsel, promise, and kind word
 About past times and present. When the scribe
 Had finished Cæsar chose a cavalier
 Brave, fluent, ardent, and of heedful mind,
 Wise, learned, a warrior, and scribe withal,
 And said : " Go to Khusrau Parwíz and say :—
 ' Thou seeker of God's way, shrewd-hearted Sháh !
 I have men, arms, and treasure, and no need
 To trouble any one but, if need were,
 Would requisition drachms from every lord
 Throughout the realm that thou mightst have thy
 wish,
 And go hence to thine own home in Írán.
 Grieve not while here, 'tis circling heaven's way,
 Which is by turns our refuge and our bale,
 By turns our loss and profit. While I find
 Arms, troops, and money do thou take thine ease.' "

The envoy went and told Khusrau Parwíz.

§ 16

*How Cæsar wrote to Khusrau Parwíz, declining to
 help him, and his Answer*

Then Cæsar cleared the audience-room and sat
 Deliberating with his counsellor,
 And said thus to that priest : " This suppliant

Hath made choice of ourselves to refuge with :
 What shall we do that he may gather strength,
 And feel no more his subject's insolence ? ”

The counsellor thus answered : “ What we need
 Is that a few shrewd-hearted men of those
 That are our well-advised philosophers
 Shall act with us herein.”

So famous Cæsar
 Dispatched a messenger and four arrived
 Of those philosophers, two young, two old,
 All Rúman-born, and thus they spake at large :—
 “ The Írániāns, since Sikandar passed away,
 Have deeply wounded us by frequent raiding,
 By war and strife, and causeless, reckless bloodshed ;
 Now holy God requiteth their ill deeds
 In kind. Since the Sásánians’ fortune hälteth
 Forbear to intervene. Khusrau Parwíz,
 If he shall gain the royal crown and raise
 His forehead to the moon, will ask for tribute
 From Rúm anon and trample on our land.
 Reflect if this be wise. Hold their words wind.”

C. 1914

When Cæsar heard he changed his mind and sent
 The Sháh a letter by a cavalier
 To tell what course the sages had advised
 In long debate. He reached Khusrau Parwíz,
 And told what he had heard the famed king say,
 Delivered Cæsar’s letter too and uttered
 Words past compute. Khusrau Parwíz grew strait
 Of heart thereat, his face turned wan with care.
 He thus replied : “ If we must lay to heart
 All that can be alleged from days of yore
 Then all our travail will but catch the wind.
 Consider now if my progenitors,
 Those chosen world-lords, men of holiness,
 Made wars with justice or unjustly ; ask
 Of ancient men who bear such things in mind.

Vouchsafe to question the wise men of Rúm
 If 'twas the crow or owl that did the wrong.¹
 Although the Maker hath not left in want
 The Great of Rúm mine ancestors withal
 Were men of name, in their own days supreme,
 Who were no brookers of insurgency,
 Pride, wrong, or foolishness from any one ;
 But what can this avail now that my head
 Is in the dragon's maw ? Greet Cæsar for me,
 And say : ' The Great speak only to the point
 In wisdom's presence though both good and ill
 Pass in the end. I will not rest till I
 Have drawn my skirt forth from this turbid stream,
 And if the Rúmans will not succour me
 I will send envoys to the Khán. My words
 Have naught availed because my river-bed
 Was fouled, and when my messengers return
 My sojourn in this city will be short.' "

He said to the Írániāns : " Obey
 My hests ; let not this matter break your hearts,
 For God, the Conqueror, is aiding us ;
 Our part is fortitude and manliness."

He took the matter lightly and dispatched
 His answer by Tukhár. He wrote as though
 He recked not either good or ill. Tukhár
 Departed from Khusrāu Parwíz and came
 To where was Cæsar's court, that man of name.

¹ Alluding to a story in the book of *Kalila and Dimna* (see Vol. vii., p. 382). The owls, having an ancient grudge against the crows, one of whom had prevented the owl from being elected the king of the cranes, made a treacherous night-attack upon the crows. A counsellor of the king of the crows, acting somewhat as an *Haitálian* chief is said to have done in the war against *Pírúz* (*id. p. 161*), succeeded in avenging them.

§ 17

*How Cæsar wrote the second Time to Khusrau Parwiz
about giving him Aid*

C. 1915 Now Cæsar having read the letter pondered,
And then addressed his noble minister :—
“ Exound these problems. Call the Great and
Brave,
Tell what hath passed at large and ascertain
If now Khusrau Parwiz in this contention
Will be successful or will writhe at fortune.
If ye shall say : ‘ He will not be victorious,
Henceforth there is no New Year’s Day for him,’
Then will we let him journey to the Khán,
And go, since he is ailing, to that cure ;
But if he is to triumph and possess
The kingship, like his father, it were well
In all ways that he go hence with a host,
And so not contemplate revenge at heart.”

The prudent minister, on hearing this,
Gave orders and the readers of the stars
Came with their ancient tablets and consulted
Until three watches of the night had passed,
And in conclusion an astrologer
Spake thus to Cæsar : “ O illustrious !
I have consulted these old tables made
In astrologic wise by Falátún.¹
Ere long Khusrau Parwiz will have the realm,
The kingship start afresh, and darksome dust
Receive him not for eight and thirty years.”

Thereat said Cæsar to his minister :—
“ Our doubts are cleared about Khusrau Parwiz.
What shall we say ? What answer shall we give ? ”

¹ Plato.

“ Let us apply a salve,” he made reply.
 “ If he betake him to the Khán’s domains,
 Get aid from him, perceive himself secure,
 And levy soldiers elsewhere than in Rúm,
 He never will forgo revenge on thee.
 Advise thou who art wiser and more potent
 In compassing thy will.”

“ We must,” said Cæsar,
 “ Dispatch him troops forthwith. When all is
 weighed
 ’Tis well to hold wealth cheap and keep from harm.”

He wrote forthwith, bestowing praise on praise :—
 “ We have consulted loyal, honest priests
 On all points bad and good, and have returned,
 Discussion over, to our former view.

All is arranged and now we will unlock
 Our ancient hoards. Within Kastantaniya¹
 We have but force enough for garrison,
 But have ta’en order and have requisitioned
 Troops from the other provinces. As these
 Arrive I will not fail to send them to thee.
 All this delay and great deliberation.

This pricking with a fleam the lion’s jaws,
 Arose from sages’ tales about the past,
 How under Sháh Shápúr, son of Ardshír,
 Our youths’ hearts aged with toil, much ravaging,
 Assault and slaughter and unjust revenge ;
 Then passing to Kubád² and to Hurmuzd,
 Both reckless of God’s justice, of our cities
 Were nine and thirty turned to bramble-brakes
 By the Íránians, and the waste became
 Filled with the blood of chiefs whose wives and children
 Were carried captive ; so thou must not marvel
 If Rúmans mused revenge. Howbeit to owe
 A grudge is not according to our Faith,

C. 1916

¹ Constantinople. ² Kaikubád in the original.

And God forbid that we should practise ill.
 We know no better thing than uprightness,
 And lack of all deceit and knavery.
 We have convoked the chiefest sufferers,
 And spoken much to them in this regard ;
 Their evil passions have been charmed away,
 For gnawing bane hath turned to antidote.
 Thus then have we secured that none will use
 The language of revenge about the past,
 And pledge our lives to further thy commands.
 Thou too must pledge thy word that none will bear
 Ill will to us, must say : ‘ While I am king
 I will not think your labours slight or mean,
 Will not demand a tribute from the Rúmans,
 Or sell for aught these services of theirs.’
 Go further in complaisance : treat and make
 Affinity with us. Whate’er ye do,
 E’en in an unjust war, let us be friends
 And brothers still through all vicissitudes
 Of power. Now when ye need our help no longer,
 And thoughts of vengeance shall recur to you,
 There will be talk again of Túr and Salm,
 And of the follies of the past, so now
 I ask a binding pact, fit for thy seal,
 As a reminder that from this time forth
 We will not speak of vengeance for Íraj,
 Or of the past. Írán and Rúm shall be
 One realm ; we will not seek to sever them.

C. 1917 There is a daughter in our ladies’ bower—
 A fit match for the greatest of the great ;
 Ask her according to our holy Faith,
 According to our rites and ritual,
 That when thou hast a child of Cæsar’s line
 He may not think of vengeance for Íraj :
 Then earth will rest from war and strife, and seek
 The right way in the Faith. Regarding this

With wisdom's eye thou wilt esteem it just.
 Affinity will make alliance sure,
 Such is the precept that we have of God.
 Good sooth, it is a long day since Pírúz,
 Or Khúshnawáz.¹ They gave their heads to wind,
 But perish any treaty-breaking king !
 Our Prophet, the Messiah, said thus : ' If thou
 Quit justice wisdom warpeth.' Many a plan
 Tried Khúshnawáz to keep the other's head
 From coming to the shears, but when Pírúz
 Used force against him, in that fight the Sháh
 Saw but black reek while host and royal throne
 Went to the winds because his head was turned
 From right. Thou art a youth new to affairs,
 And if thou wouldest gather fortune's fruit
 Make not a treaty-breaker thine ally ;
 Dust is the shroud of such, and crown and throne
 Curse treaty-breaking, strife-provoking kings.
 Peruse my letter o'er and, if thy fingers
 Possess the needful skill, write heedfully
 A fair and good response. I would not have
 This known to any scribe, so write thyself,
 And take good heed. When I shall read thine
 answer,
 And see therein the heart of one resolved,
 I will dispatch forthwith arms, troops, and money
 To ease thy heart of care. As touching those
 Who are with thee most honoured or renowned,
 And those withal 'gainst whom thou harbourest
 vengeance,²
 Put manfully such hatred from your hearts.
 Leave their³ ill doings to almighty God,

¹ With a slight change of reading. Mohl translates : " Depuis Pirouz jusqu'à Khouschnewaz, il s'est passé bien du temps, pendant lequel les deux peuples ont livré leurs têtes au vent."

² Or " And him withal," etc., referring to Bahrám Chúbína.

³ Or " his."

And be not masterful with friend or foe.
 If thou wouldst have victorious fortune hold thee
 Lord of the world with host and crown and throne,
 Lay not thy hand on others' goods but make
 Thy soul a pathway toward the light, indulge
 Thy kindred, and protect the labouring poor.
 If thou art bounteous and a friend in need
 None will attempt thy crown and throne. Of Sháhs
 The vigilant have kept the world from foes.

C. 1918

The magnates that desire affinity
 Themselves or for their virtuous children ne'er
 Have suffered ill from foemen, and God's Grace
 Hath magnified them.¹ Now we all court thee,
 And deck our tongues to give thee good advice."

Whenas the address was dry they sealed the letter
 With musk. Now when with tidings of a league
 That he expected not the letter reached
 Khusrau Parwíz he told the Iránians :—
 "The sun revolveth otherwise to-day !
 A letter of high policy hath come
 From Cæsar in most favourable terms :
 He seeketh to abate the ancient feud
 Between Irán and Rúm."

They answered him :—

"Whene'er this feud is o'er no chiefs will seek
 The Sháh's crown, or such numbers live in want.
 If in thy days such righteousness come down
 Men will inscribe thy name on every crown."

¹ Couplets transposed.

§ 18

How Khusrau Parwíz answered Cæsar about the Alliance

Now when they had approved this policy
 Khusrau Parwíz put strangers forth and called
 For inkhorn, pen, and silk of Chín, and bade
 A scribe attend. He wrote, as Sháhs were wont,
 Thus in the olden tongue in royal script :—
 “ Khusrau Parwíz doth swear by holy God,
 By circling sun and stable earth that while
 I sit as Sháh upon the seat of state,
 Lord of Írán, its treasures and its troops,
 I will not ask the chiefs of Rúm for tribute,
 Or send a host against those fields and fells.
 I will restore to Cæsar all the cities
 Thereof however tradeless they may be
 And worthless, and thereafter will return
 Their documents and records. Further, I
 Am well content to ask of him a daughter
 Whose mother is both pure and of his race,
 And by so asking illustrate my heart.
 Entrust to those Írániacs at thy court,
 And under thy protection—Gustaham,
 Kharrád, son of Barzín, of royal race,
 Shápúr and Andiyán—thy daughter, wise
 And high-renowned, when thou dost send the troops.
 I am through mine affinity to thee
 As my great family were heretofore.
 The first was Gaiúmart, the next Jamshíd—
 A source of hope and terror to the world—
 Then followed others of the glorious stock,
 Great men in wisdom and in royalty.
 From those old monarchs, wearers of the crown,

C. 1919

The story runneth on to Kai Káús,
 And Kai Khusrau, and by the selfsame token
 To mighty Kai Kúbád¹ whose justice made
 The sheep and wolf akin. Pursue the tale
 To Sháh Luhrasp through whom to Sháh Gushtásp
 There came the glorious Asfanfiyár,
 That chief of chiefs, from whom sprang great Bahman,
 And thus we come to Ardshír Pápakán
 'Neath whom our ancient star regained its youth.
 Now when Khusrau Parwíz, son of Hurmuzd,
 Is one in heart and sentiment with Cæsar,
 Among whose distant ancestors was Salm
 (I seek no fables and I tell no lies)
 We shall abolish all the feud between us,
 And Rúman and Íránian will be one.
 I do accept from Cæsar Cæsar's daughter—
 The crown of all his daughters. Whatsoever
 May be her faults or virtues it is well,
 And holy God is witness to this letter,
 Writ in mine own hand known throughout the world,
 And I have sealed the letter with my seal
 According to our customs, ways, and faith.
 For thy successors—world-lords crowned and
 throned—
 That which is written here shall be my pledge,
 With mind and wisdom to corroborate,
 That I will keep my word in great and small.
 That what I say is true my heart and star,
 And holy God, bear witness, so delay not
 To act upon thy words, for I have lingered
 Long in this city."

All being said, he gave
 The letter to Khúrshíd, son of Kharrád.
 As swift as wind that chieftain rose and mounting
 His chestnut steed sped till he came to Cæsar,

¹ Kai Kubád really preceded the two Sháhs previously mentioned.

And gave the message of Khusrau Parwíz.
 Then Cæsar, having snapped the band and read
 The words of that exalted Sháh, commanded
 The wise men and the eloquent to meet
 Before him and inquired of them in turn :—
 “ What cure shall I adopt ? How shall I make
 A treaty with the monarch of Írán ?
 His letter leaveth us without excuse ;
 All we of Rúm and of Írán are one.”

The chiefs and sages rose to answer him,
 And said : “ We are but subjects ; thou art Cæsar, C. 1920
 The world-lord throned and crowned. Do thou
 advise,
 Who hast both counsel and authority :
 Our bodies and our souls are thine.”

When Cæsar
 Heard he commended those shrewd, pious chiefs,
 And waited till in the revolving sky
 The lamp of day had lost its radiancy.

§ 19

*How Cæsar made a Talisman and deceived the Envoys
 of Khusrau Parwiz, and how Kharrád, Son of
 Barzín, solved the Mystery*

When circling Sol grew pale, and in the tower
 Of night the stars were stationed, Cæsar bade
 His warlocks muse and frame a talisman—
 A marvel—somewhere, such as none would know
 From real—a woman modest, fair, and seated
 In trailing raiment on a goodly throne
 With handmaids on both sides of her and slaves
 Before her and behind. She was to sit,

That moon-faced one in silence, to appear
 A woman weeping, and from time to time
 To raise one hand and dash her tears away.
 The warlocks, as they were instructed, made
 The semblance of a woman with long hair,
 And all that from a distance gazed thereon
 Took it to be a woman lovelorn, bright,
 That sorely wept o'er Christ, her cheeks aflame,
 Her lashes like Spring-clouds. When of the adepts
 That talisman was set up in its place
 One went and said to Cæsar : " We have finished
 The matter in accord to what thou badest."

When he had heard this from the expert, Cæsar
 Came from his throne in haste and visited
 The talisman. He marvelled at that feat
 Of sorcery and sent for Gustaham.

He bounteously rewarded those magicians
 With money and with divers other gifts,
 Then said to Gustaham : " Famed warrior !
 I had a daughter beautiful as Spring :
 She grew up to a marriageable age.

I had a kinsman, an aspiring one,
 To whom I married her with Christian rites.
 I countenanced him unadvisedly,
 And sent her to his palace. That youth's soul
 Hath gone to Heaven ; she is deeply grieved ;
 Bright day for her is lapis-lazuli ;

C. 1921
 She will not take my rede or speak a word,
 And our young world hath agéd through her trouble.
 Concern thyself to see her, and employ
 The words of men of lore, for thou art wise,
 A paladin by race, and she may speak
 To thee"

He said : " I will : it may be I
 Shall banish this affection from her breast."

With cheerful heart and charged with potent words

That chief approached the guileful talisman,
 Which bowed to greet him as he neared its throne.
 Illustrious Gustaham sat humbly down,
 And spake to that sad dame, beginning boldly
 With such advice as seemed to him of profit :—
 “ O daughter born of Cæsar’s race ! ” he said,
 “ The wise exclaim not at the course of nature :
 The flying eagles, lions in the forests,
 And fishes in the waters, are not free
 From death,” but all his words were wind ; no soul,
 Or tongue had she but ever and anon
 Would dash away the tear-drops from her eyes
 As her physician talked. While Gustaham
 Was lost in wonder Cæsar summoned him,
 And asked : “ How didst thou find that child of mine,
 Whose pain and mourning cause me this distress ? ”

He answered : “ I advised her much but vainly.”
 The following day said Cæsar to Bálwí :—
 “ Go thou with Andiyán. Shápúr withal,
 The nobly born, may help to make my heart
 Glad in my daughter. Go to that sorrower,
 And speak to her about the famous king.
 She that is heaping fire upon my head
 May answer thee. Be good enough to aid me
 By converse with my mourning child ; perchance
 In view of your high rank she may accept
 Your counsels. Sure I am that she will speak
 To-day, and when she maketh fair reply
 I shall be freed from this disconsolate,
 Who raineth tears of blood upon her breast.”

Then those three noble Persians went to her,
 And each one strove, but answer gat they none ;
 That tongueless dame was mute. The baffled three
 Went back to Cæsar, that just judge, and said :—
 “ We spake and gave advice as best we could,
 But there was no improvement.”

C. 1922

“ ‘Tis ill hap

For us,” he said, “ to grieve for one in grief.”

Since these great men had failed he had recourse
To great Kharrád, son of Barzín. “ Thou art,”
He said, “ one of these chiefs and thou mayst hear
Her voice forthwith,” then sent him to the mourner
From court attended by a trusty servant.

When he arrived he looked upon the mien
Of that crowned form and waited in its presence
No little while. The guileful talisman
Made him a bow of greeting. He observed
The woman, head and foot, most heedfully,
And marked the attendants standing round. He
spake

At large ; she answered not a word ; that man,
That scion of the chiefs, grew full of thought.

“ If grief hath robbed her of her wits,” he said,
“ Why do her servants hold their peace the while ?

If these be very tear-drops from her eyes
One would expect her passion to abate.

She letteth fall the drops upon her breast,
And knoweth not to move to left or right ;
Her tears fall on one spot ; she hath not used
One hand or stirred a foot ! Had this form life
She would move more than foot or hand, would shed
Her tears, and stretch her other hand, elsewhere.

I see life stir not in her body ; ‘tis
A talisman of these philosophers.”

He came to Cæsar with a smile and said :—

“ This moon-faced lady is not rational ;

It is a talisman of Rúman make,

And hath deceived Bálwí and Gustaham.

Thy purpose was to laugh at us or charm

Our eyes. Our Sháh when he shall hear will smile
With open lips and show his silvern teeth.”

Said Cæsar : “ Live for ever ! Thou art fit

To be the minister of kings. I have
 A wondrous chamber in my palace, one
 Can not imagine aught more marvellous.
 When thou beholdest it thou wilt not know
 Its secret—talisman or work divine."

Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing this,
 Went to that ancient chamber and beheld
 A cavalier upstanding, poised in air,
 And going back to famous Cæsar said :—
 " The cavalier is iron and the chamber
 Withal is fashioned of the famous ore
 Called loadstone by the sages. Those of Rúm
 Have mounted him upon an Indian steed.
 Whoe'er shall read the Indians' books will find
 Both pleasure and enlightenment of mind."

§ 20

*How Kharrád, Son of Barzín, expounded the Faith of
 the Indians and exhorted Cæsar*

" In what regard," said Cæsar, " do the Indians
 Err from the Path ? Those that are worshippers,
 Are they idolaters or what are they ? "

C. 1923

Kharrád, son of Barzín, replied : " In Hind
 They worship ox and moon, put not their trust
 In God and circling heaven, and regard not
 Their persons, look no higher than the sun,
 And reckon not men like ourselves as wise.
 Whoever kindleth fire, shall enter it,
 And shall consume himself therein, believeth
 That in the air there is a fire ordained
 By God, whose word is law, which fire the sage
 Of Hind entitleth ' Ether ' and hath much

Of worth and interest to say thereon,
 As thus : when earthly and ethereal fires
 Combine man's sin is purged ; they must be kindled
 Since burning is accounted righteousness.
 Withal ye too speak not aright ; hereto
 Christ's life is testimony. Mark'st thou not
 What Jesus, son of Mary,¹ said when he
 Was bringing secret things to light ? ' If one
 Shall take thy skirt from thee resist him not,
 And if one buffet thee upon the face,
 So that thine eyes are darkened by the blows,
 Be not enraged or let thy cheek turn pale,
 But shut thine eyes and speak no chilling word.²
 If thou hast little food let it suffice,
 And if thou hast no carpet seek one not.
 Hold not this kind of evil to be bad,
 And ye without a pang will quit this Gloom.'
 But now with you desire is king o'er wisdom,
 Your hearts have erred through overweening greed,
 For ye have raised your palaces to Saturn,
 And camels bear your treasures' keys. Besides
 The treasures ye have mighty hosts with coats
 Of mail from 'Ád and Rúman helms. Ye lead
 Hosts everywhere unjustly and allow not
 Your swords to rest. The wilderness is all
 One fount of blood : Christ led you not to this.
 He was a poor, unfurnished man who earned
 His bread by toil and lived on curds and milk
 With butter for his only other food.
 Now when the Jews gat hold of him and saw
 Him friendless and without resource they slew him,
 And having slain him set him on the gibbet
 To make thereby his Faith contemptible.
 His father was an ancient man, his mother

¹ "Ísá son of Maryam" in the original.

² S. Mat. v. 39, 40. S. Luke, vi. 29.

A temple-keeper and a trier out
 Of good and ill.¹ Grown ardent and desirous
 Of knowledge, eloquent, instructed, mindful,
 He made withal disciples by his teaching,
 And compassed in his youth his will by shrewdness.
 Thou sayest that he was God's son and smiled
 When slain upon the gibbet !² At such things
 The sage doth smile. If thou art wise fear God,
 Who hath no need of consort and of son,
 And unto whom all mysteries are clear.
 Why turn'st thou from the Faith of Gaiúmart,
 The path and precedent of Tahmúras,
 Which tell us that the Judge of earth is One,
 And that our only course is serving Him ?
 The experienced thane and worshipper of God,
 When muttering prayer he taketh in his hand
 The sacred twigs, may taste no drop of water
 Albeit for very thirst he dream thereof ;
 He trusteth God upon the day of battle,
 And asketh not cold water in the fight.
 Withal he taketh for his cynosure
 The highest element which is above
 Earth, air, and water. Our Sháhs barter not
 Their Faith but list to Him, the Lord of all.
 They joy not in dínárs and gems but seek
 To make their name and mark by justice only,
 By gifts of lofty palaces or joying
 The hearts of mourners. Fourthly, they pronounce
 None wise but one that on the day of battle
 Doth veil the bright sun's face with dust and guardeth
 The land from foes. Be curses his, not blessings,
 That seeketh from religion aught but right."

When Cæsar heard this he approved ; the words

¹ According to the Kurán Mary had been dedicated from the first to the service of God. Zacharias built for her a chamber in the temple and provided for her. SK, i. 58 and *notes*.

² See p. 191.

Seemed profitable to him, and he said :—
 “ The Maker made thee foremost of the great ;
 One needs must hearken to thy pure discourse.
 Thou hast the key that openeth the door
 Of mysteries. The head of one with liege
 Like this is higher than the moon’s own crown.”

Then from his treasury he bade to bring
 Dínárs and drachms and crown magnifical,
 Bestowed them on Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 And uttered many praises : “ Cultured be
 The country of Írán,” he said, “ through thee.”

§ 21

How Cæsar sent a Host and his Daughter to Khusrau Parwiz

C. 1925 Now Cæsar, when he heard that troops had come,
 And that the world was black with horsemen’s dust,
 Chose from those Rúmans five-score thousand men,
 All famed in battle, requisitioned arms,
 War-steeds and drachms, and thus much time elapsed.
 He had one daughter Maryam hight, wise, grave,
 Well counselled and resolved, and later on
 Brought forth such stores of bridal bravery
 That e’en the speedy baggage-beasts grew slow—
 Gold trinkets, jewels that a king might wear,
 Gems, gold-embroidered raiment, carpetings,
 Brocade of Rúm with golden patterns wrought
 Upon a ground of silk, torques, bracelets, earrings,
 And three most costly and bejewelled crowns.
 He had four gilded litters too made ready,
 Their curtains decorate with royal gems,
 And forty others made of ebony

All jewelled like the eye of chanticleer.
 Then came three hundred moon-faced waiting-maids
 All colour and perfume, five hundred slave-boys
 Intelligent and bright with ornaments
 Of gold and silver, forty Rúman eunuchs
 Fay-faced, illustrious, attractive men,
 And four of the philosophers of Rúm,
 Wise, learned and famed. He gave them their
 instructions,
 And privily withal charged Maryam
 To be obedient, order her desires,
 To do her duty, to be bountiful,
 As to her food and how to bear herself.
 There was, as reckoned in the Rúman way,
 More than three hundred millions' worth¹ of goods.
 To every envoy at his court he gave
 A crown inlaid with jewels, robes withal,
 Steeds and dínárs and much of all things fitting.
 He bade write to the Sháh on painted silk :—
 “ Well may they raise their necks up to the moon,
 These subjects of the Sháh ! No man more courteous
 Than Gustaham hath sprung from small or great.
 Is there a champion like the chief Shápúr
 To act as arbiter ? Bálwí withal
 Can keep a secret for he would not sell
 His folk for aught, while none though he live long
 Will see one like Kharrád, son of Barzín,
 Whom God created to solve mysteries.
 He is as bright and faultless as the sun,
 Divine in rede and deed.”

C. 1926

This written, he summoned
 His counsellors and readers of the stars
 To fix a lucky day for setting forth,
 And started on Bahrám with favouring stars
 And auguries. He went himself three stages,

¹ “ *de dirhems.*” Mohl.

And then resigned the conduct of the host,
 Bade Maryam come to him, conversed with her
 At large, and said : “ Be ware of putting off
 Thy girdle till thou comest to Írán.
 Khusrau Parwíz must see thee not unveiled
 Till then or things unlooked for may befall thee,”
 Then bade her tenderly farewell : “ May heaven
 Protect thee on thy way.”

He had a brother,
 The valiant Niyátús, who led his host
 In that campaign, and “ Maryam is akin
 To thee,” he said, “ in blood and, I would add,
 In Faith. I charge thee with her, with this
 wealth,
 And this well ordered army.”

Niyátús

Accepted all from Cæsar who, this said,
 Turned back in tears. The host marched toward
 Warígh,
 Led on by Niyátús with mace and sword.

Khusrau Parwíz, on hearing that the host
 Had come, set out with forces from that city,
 And when the leaders’ dust-clouds and the flags
 Of those mailed cavaliers appeared, and when
 The troops came onward cloud-like, lapped in iron,
 In helmet and cuirass, his heart laughed out,
 Like Spring-tide roses, at that fine array ;
 He plucked up heart and gave his steed the heel.
 He saw, embraced, and greeted Niyátús,
 And testified his gratitude to Cæsar,
 Who had endured such toil and with that toil
 Of ordering the host had rendered void
 His treasury ; then going to the litter
 Beheld the face of Maryam through her veil,
 Saluted her and kissed her hand, rejoicing
 To look upon the Fair. He bore her off

To his encampment where he gave his Moon
 A bower and passed three days in converse with her.
 Upon the fourth when Sol, the world's light, shone
 They gat in readiness a choice pavilion,
 And summoned Niyátús, Sarkab, and Kút,
 The bold, with other chiefs both great and small,
 Whom thus the Sháh addressed : “ What chiefs and C. 1927
 warriors

Are here, such men as brandish sword and mace,
 In battle reck not of their lives, and turn not
 From lion or from leopard in the fray ? ”

Then Niyátús made choice of seventy men
 To lead in fight ; each had beneath his banner
 A thousand chosen, lance-armed cavaliers.
 Khusrau Parwíz beheld this picked array
 Of noble horsemen eager for the strife ;
 He praised the Maker of heaven, time, and earth,
 He praised too Niyátús, his troops withal,
 And noble Cæsar and his realm, and said :—
 “ If God almighty aid me in this war
 I will display my puissance and make
 Earth like a sea for jewels ; ye shall joy
 At having come and rather tell thereof
 Than hold your peace : heaven's airs shall breathe
 love-fraught
 From pleasance, friendship be our only thought.”

§ 22

*How Khusrau Parwíz led his Host to Ázar Abádagán
 and how Bandwí met him on the Way*

Upon the seventh day that comely Sháh
 Arrayed his host as 'twere the turning sky,
 The din of tymbals went up from the court,

And air grew ebon with the dust of troops.
 He chose a force of Persians and set out
 Toward Ázar Ábádagán. There passed
 Two weeks what while by order of the Sháh
 The soldiers concentrated at his camp.
 He pitched it on the plain of Dúk ; the army
 Was great and under Rúman discipline.
 He gave the whole host up to Niyátús,
 Thus saying : " Thou art master of the flock,"
 And thence with certain valiant cavaliers
 Let his swift steed have rein and made toward
 Khanjast—an anxious journey—till he reached
 Mausíl, the Armenian, who could hold his own
 Among the great and had with him Bandwí,
 The Sháh's maternal uncle. Now these twain,
 On hearing that Khusrau Parwíz was stirring,
 Sped from the waste to meet him on the way,
 Preceding their own troops. To Gustaham
 The Sháh said, seeing them upon the road :—
 " O warrior ! two are hurrying o'er the field :
 See who they are and wherefore in such haste."

C. 1928

He answered : " Sure am I, O king ! that he
 Who rideth on the piebald is my brother,
 The brave Bandwí : his friend is not of us."

The Sháh said : " What ! How canst thou know
 him ? Nay,
 Seek him in ward if living and if slain
 Upon a gibbet in the riding-ground."

Said Gustaham : " O Sháh ! regard him well
 From this side : 'tis thine uncle : let me die
 For saying so if it prove otherwise."

Afoot the twain approached the shady spot
 Where was the Sháh, praised him and did obeisance.
 He gave Bandwí a welcome and observed :—
 " I said that I should find thee hid in dust."

He told the Sháh all that had chanced to him,

His ruse of putting on the royal robes,
And all Bahrám Chúbína's clemency.

Khusráu Parwíz wept greatly at the tale,
Then asked him : " Who is this ? "

" O sun-faced Sháh !

Hast thou no kindly welcome for Mausíl ? "

He answered. " Since thou left'st Írán for Rúm
He hath not slept in lands inhabited,
But camped upon the plain, his palace been
Tent and pavilion. The troops with him
Are many ; he hath all the gear of greatness,
With drachms and treasures. Now he hath been
waiting

Upon the road and longed for thy return."

" How came it," asked the world-lord of Mausíl,
" That all thy toil was hidden ? We will strive
To give thee happy days and make thy name
The greatest of the great."

Mausíl replied :—

" Give me new life, O king ! Let me approach
And kiss thy stirrup while I praise thy Grace
And splendour."

" For these words," replied the Sháh,
" I will make bright thy gains to pay thy pains,
Will grant thy wish and set thy name on high
Above the great."

Then he withdrew one foot
Out of the stirrup, and that ardent soul,
All eagerness, kissed foot and stirrup both,
O'ercome by veneration for the Sháh,
Who, when that loyal liege was satisfied,
Bade him remount and urged his own steed on
Across that barren waste until he reached
Ázargashasp. With muttered prayer he entered
The Fire-fane, with an aching heart. A priest,
The Zandavasta in his hand, approached

The pious Sháh who, loosing from his loins
 His golden belt, flung jewels on the Fire,
 And in his prayers outdid the priest himself.
 “Just Judge!” he said, “bring my foes’ heads to
 dust.

Thou knowest that I justly plead and purpose
 To keep the path of good. Approve not Thou
 The injustice of the unjust.”

This said, he girt
 His golden belt and sought the plain of Dúk
 With wounded heart in trouble for his way :
 Night fell ere he reached camp.

He sent shrewd spies
 To learn the posture of the world’s affairs,
 And when the army of Nímrúz had heard :—
 “The Sháh, the lustre of the world, hath come,”
 They bound the drums upon the elephants,
 And earth became as ’twere the river Nile.
 All folk at that intelligence, which made
 Them young again, drew near to give him aid.

§ 23

*How Bahrám Chúbína had Tidings of the Coming of
 Khusrau Parwíz and wrote to the Chiefs of Irán,
 and how the Letter fell into the Hands of Khusrau
 Parwíz and his Answer*

Bahrám Chúbína heard : “The Grace of kingship
 Hath been revived,” and cast his eyes on one
 Devoted to himself, one of the host,
 Aspiring, sage, fair-famed—Dárá Panáh—
 Then called a scribe of note whom he instructed
 To write him letters of great charge to all

The valiant leaders—Gustaham, Bandwí,
 Gurdwí, the warrior (for he had won
 That name from all the other chiefs), Shápúr,
 And Andiyán, the cavalier, and all
 That were the living memories of the great.
 The letters¹ ran : “ I offer to the Maker
 Mine adoration privily that ye
 May all awake from sleep and hasten not
 To ill on this wise for from verge to centre,
 With this Sásánian race in evidence,
 Things worsen through their wrangling and self-
 seeking.

Ardshír, sprung from Pápak, was first to bring
 Confusion on the world, his scimitar

C. 1930

O'ershadowed all his age and mazed the Great ;
 And first of all I instance Ardawán

With other chiefs of ardent soul whose names
 Are lacking on the earth to this throne's grief.

Then surely ye have heard of what befell,
 Through ill-advised Pírúz, to Súfarai.

He freed Kubád from fetters and Kubád,
 Of all the chieftains, gave him to the wind ;

For when malevolent Kubád grew strong
 He put away his virtues, took to crime,

Slew this illustrious and devoted man,
 And soured the nobles' hearts. He that aggrieveth

His kin, preferring passion to his child,
 Would injure strangers more. No one would look

For ivory in ebony ; so put not
 Your only trust in the Sásánians,

Or seek for jewels in red willow-trees.
 When they shall bring this letter unto you

May your Urmuzd prove gracious. Ye possess
 A place illustrious in my regard ;

¹ The word is used here sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural. Several copies were made of the letter actually written.

The breast and sleeves are all one with the shirt ;
 Our place for rest and sleep by dark or day
 Is one, and when ye join me ye will brighten
 My gloomy soul. I reck not of the Rúmans,
 Or of their king, and will tread down their heads
 And throne."

They sealed the letters with his seal,
 And then the envoy went in merchants' guise
 In haste to where Khusrau Parwíz held court.
 He had a caravan of various goods,
 And with the letters carried presents too.
 He marked the grandeur and great host wherefor,
 Thou wouldest have said : "Earth hath no thorough-
 fare,"
 And thought : "With such a king who will confide
 In brave Bahrám Chúbína ? I am Persian,
 I carry thirty camels' loads of goods,
 And have no foes ; why should I wreck myself
 When majesty hath risen from the abyss ?
 I will deliver to Khusrau Parwíz
 The letters—an unlooked for offering."

Perturbed he reached the Sháh's court with those
 letters,
 And all the presents of that hostile liege ;
 He brought the drachms, the letters, and the gifts,
 Revealing all. The world-lord having read
 Assigned the messenger a golden seat,
 And said to him : "O man exceeding wise !
 Speak of Bahrám Chúbína as one vile
 In our regard. Thou hast attained thine end,
 But make it not a feather in thy cap."¹

Then sending for a scribe he had an answer,
 Such as the case required, drawn up at large :—
 "Brave and exalted chief ! we have perused
 Thy letters and been privy with thine envoy.

¹ By boasting of it.

In word we battle for Khusrau Parwíz,
 But are to thee like new Spring in our hearts.
 When thou hast led thine army hither who
 Will reck of Rúm or Rúmans ? We will draw
 Our scimitars and slay them in the fight.
 Khusrau Parwíz, when he shall see thine host,
 Thy prowess and pre-eminence, will quail
 At heart upon the battle-day and flee
 Like fox before thee.”

Having sealed the letters
 He gave them to that loyal chief and said :—
 “ For this thy conduct, sage ! thou shalt have fruit
 From toil,” then gave him jewels and dínárs,
 And many precious gems. “ Convey,” he said,
 “ These to Bahrám Chúbína and recount
 What thou hast heard, and thou shalt want for
 nothing
 When my high fortune brighteneth.”

From court

Dárá Panáh departed and achieved
 His journey like the wind. The youth delivered
 The letters which the paladin received.
 When that aspirant had perused the letter
 He summoned greed and banished rede, and led
 By what the letters said prepared to march.
 The Írániáns were amazed. The elders went,
 On seeing that blind act, and said : “ Depart not,
 Or thy young day will age. Khusrau Parwíz,
 If he invadeth us, will only find
 The maces and the scimitars of war ;
 But do not thou betray the royal throne,
 Or fortune will beguile thee forwardly.”¹

¹ The meaning seems to be :—“ If you remain on the defensive you may rely on the people supporting you against Khusrau Parwíz backed up, as he will be, by foreign troops ; but if you assume the offensive you will throw away this advantage and so betray your own cause.”

Their words were vain ; he bade the host assemble ;
 He loaded up the baggage, called to horse,
 Struck up the drums, and led the army forth.
 That valiant armament of Persians reached
 Ázar Ábadagán. Host drew near host,
 And ant and fly were barred from thoroughfare.
 That warring subject said : “ I fain would scan
 Yon host and see what Rúman cavaliers
 Are like, and if their troops are troops or what.”

C. 1932

Then with Yálán-sína and with the chief,
 Izid Gashasp, the warriors all mounted
 Upon their steeds. These magnates went to view
 The hostile host, saw and returning told
 Their chief : “ Yon host is boundless ! The affair
 Is other than we deemed.”

Upon their side
 The Rúman horsemen of the Sháh arrived
 In all haste at the place of audience,
 And girding up their loins exclaimed : “ We long
 To battle with the Íránians,” which thing
 Accorded to the wishes of the king.

§ 24

*How Khusrau Parwiz fought with Bahrám Chúbina
 and how Kút, the Rúman, was slain*

When Sol rose o'er the darksome hills the war-cry
 Ascended from both hosts ; thou wouldst have said :—
 “ Earth is a turning sky and swords eclipse
 The sun ! ” The troops drew up to left and right ;
 Earth was an iron mountain. At the neighing
 Of chargers and the shouting of the hosts
 The desert fled for shelter to the hills.

When brave Bahrám Chúbína saw he drew
 His glittering glaive, his heart conceived no fears
 Though raging lions' hearts were rent asunder.¹
 He went himself to view the left and right,
 And told Yalán-sína : “ Take thou the centre,
 And keep before the army for I champion
 The troops to-day and tarry though they flee.”

Khusrau Parwíz surveyed the battlefield,
 And saw the whole world blackened by the hosts ;
 The bright sun's face was like a lion's maw,
 And thou hadst said : “ The clouds are raining
 · swords ! ”

Then Niyátús, Bandwí, and Gustaham
 Went with the Sháh from battlefield to height.
 Those leaders took their station on Mount Dúk,
 Their eyes upon their followers, and thence
 The Sháh surveyed his host, the right and left,
 The centre and the wings. The tymbals sounded
 From both sides and the eager warriors
 Advanced to fight. “ Earth is an iron mountain,”
 Thou wouldest have said, “ heaven lost in foemen's
 dust ! ”

Now when Khusrau Parwíz saw matters thus,
 Saw heaven as woof and earth as warp, he prayed
 Thus in the olden tongue : “ O Thou more pure,
 And higher than the high ! who but Thyselv,
 O holy Judge ! can tell which will return
 Exulting from the fight to-day ? The spear
 Of him whose fortune halteth hath but thorn
 Or weed for point.”

C. 1933

Khusrau Parwíz was full
 Of care, both heart and soul ; the world appeared
 A brake to him, for from among the troops
 Kút, like a dark hill in his iron mail,
 Brake from the centre to the height and cried :—

¹ Couplet omitted.

“ Illustrious monarch ! point me out the slave,
 The doer of dív’s work, ’gainst whom thou foughtest
 When in Írán and fleddest while he triumphed.
 Look to the army’s left and right, and find him
 Among the chieftains. I will teach him warfare,
 And show what hearts and might true warriors have.”

Thereat all mindful of the former fight
 The Sháh was vexed at heart because Kút said :—
 “ Thou didst let fall thy knightly equipage,
 And flee before a slave,” but answered not ;
 His heart was full, he sighed. At length he said :—
 “ Approach yon rider on the piebald steed ;
 He will attack thee when he seeth thee ;
 Then fly not lest thou bite thy lips in shame.”

Kút sped back like the wind and spear in hand
 Came furious as a maddened elephant
 Upon the battlefield. Yalán-sína
 Called to Bahrám Chúbína, saying : “ Beware,
 Brave cavalier ! A dív armed with a lance,
 And with a lasso in his straps, hath come
 Like elephant gone mad.”

He heard, unsheathed
 Like wind his falchion and proclaimed his name,
 Which when the Sháh observed he rose and peered
 Down from the mountain-top upon the pair,
 Wet-eyed and wroth of heart. Now when the Rúman
 Charged with his lance the aspirant gripped his steed,
 Escaped the thrust, raised to his face his shield,
 And clave his foe asunder to the breast.
 The sword’s clash reached Khusrau Parwíz who
 laughed

To see the stroke struck by Bahrám Chúbína,
 While valaint Niyátús frown-blinded raged
 Because the Sháh had laughed, and said : “ Great
 sir !
 One should not laugh in war whereof thou knowest

Naught but the sleights, and when thou wouldest
avenge

C. 1934

Thine ancestors I see thy heart asleep.
Men will not see in any peopled part
Of Rúm or of Írán one like to Kút,
Hazára's son, whose slaying made thee laugh.
Know this, that fortune hath deserted thee."

He made reply : " I laugh not at his slaughter,
Or at his body which is cleft in twain.
Know this that he who mocketh shall receive
Himself a buffet from the turning sky.
He said to me : ' Thou fleddest from a slave
With whom thou hadst not prowess to contend.'
But fleeing from this slave who striketh blows
In such wise in the battle is no shame."

Bahrám Chúbína for his part exclaimed :—
" Ye chiefs of glorious birth—Yálán-sína,
Rám and Izid Gashasp ! bind ye the slain
Upon his charger and thus send him back
To his own camp for their own Sháh to see."

They hasted to secure upon the saddle
The corpse of Kút, and then the charger sped
Back to the camp with that exalted chief.
Khusrau Parwíz was grieved at heart for Kút.
They loosed the knotted lasso from the slain,
Then by the Sháh's direction dried the body,
And having filled with musk and stitched the wounds,
Sewed up the corpse in linen and dispatched it,
All armed and girded, unto Cæsar, saying :—
" If this infernal slave can give such blows
In time of battle with his scimitar
I am not shamed for having fled from him."

The Rúmans were heart-broken ere they fought,
And sorely stricken ; their patricians wept ;
They all were tearful and dispirited.
Ten thousand of the mighty men advancing

All prelates,¹ warriors, and cavaliers,
 Charged so that hills split at the cry of them.
 The clash of arms, the shoutings of the chiefs,
 The blows of scimitar and massive mace,
 Rose. Thou hadst said : “ It is a raging sea,
 And heaven as it turneth crieth ‘ Blood.’ ”
 The hosts were blocked and sundered by the slain ;
 An army of those Rúman chiefs had fallen.
 Khusrau Parwíz was stricken to the heart,
 And had the wounds of those still living dressed.
 They piled the corpses mountain-high ; men called it
 “ The harvest of Bahrám.” Khusrau Parwíz
 C. 1935 Lost faith in Rúmans for he said : “ If they
 Bear them like this again know that their host
 Will cease to be and all their swords of steel
 Prove merely wax.”

Then said he to Sarkab :—
 “ To-morrow take no Rúmans to engage,
 But rest and I will lead the Íránian host
 To battle.”

To the Írániens he said :—
 “ No more delay ; to-morrow ye must fight,”
 And one and all replied : “ We will not fail
 To level to the plain mount, waste, and dale.”

§ 25

How Khusrau Parwíz fought with Bahrám Chúbína the second Time, was defeated, and escaped from him by the Help of Surúsh

When day’s white banner rose aloft the main,
 And when the stars grew hopeless of the dark,
 The drummers went forth from both camp-enclosures

¹ Cf. Vol. i. p. 373.

With elephants and clarions. There rose
 The sound of pipes and horns, the trumpeting
 Of elephants, and clash of brazen cymbals.
 Thou wouldest have said : " The plains and uplands
 heave,
 The sun's face is like raven's plumes," and when
 The Iránians ranged their ranks and grasped their
 spears,
 And Indian swords, thou wouldest have said : " The
 earth
 Is all cuirass, the spear-heads light the stars ! "
 Whenas Khusrau Parwíz arrayed the centre
 The troops took heart. Gurdwí, that brave aspirant,
 Commanded on the right, and on the left
 A famed Armenian¹ with cuirass and sword
 Like Áhriaman's. Shápúr with Sipansár
 And Andiyán drew tight their loins for battle,
 While close beside the Sháh was Gustaham
 To guard him from the foe.

Bahrám Chúbína,

The hero, seeing not the Rúmans, paused
 In silence, then commanded and they bound
 The drums upon the elephants ; the world
 Was like the Nile. The elephant he rode
 Was white and his antagonist despaired.
 He charged the Sháh's right, shouting to Shápúr :—
 " O knave ! 'twas not thy promise in thy letter
 To come against me on this field of blood !
 This is not Persians' usage, and thou givest
 Thy body to be slaughtered all for naught."

Shápúr replied to him : " Thou dív-like one !
 Thou hast lost all thy wits in slavery.
 Whose name and token did the letter bear
 Of which thou speak'st in presence of the lords ? "
 Then great Khusrau Parwíz said to Shápúr :—

C. 1936

¹ Mausíl.

“ That letter was to match with his designs ;
 I and the other nobles of the host
 Will compensate thee for it. In due season
 I will explain and purge thee of suspicion.”

Bahrám Chúbína heard Khusrau Parwíz,
 Perceived the ruse, was both enraged and shamed,
 And in his wrath resolved on fight. The usurper
 Charged all alone upon his elephant
 The centre of the army of the Sháh,
 Who saw and said to Andiyán : “ Fierce lion !
 Shower arrows on yon elephant and make
 Your bows like clouds in Spring.”

The Írániáns,
 All that were fortune-favoured, strung their bows.
 The elephant’s trunk was riddled so with shafts
 That thou hadst said : “ It is a Nile ! ”¹ Forthwith
 Bahrám Chúbína called for horse and helm,
 King-worthy, and the arrows showered anew
 Upon that proud one’s steed. The warrior
 Alighting, girt his mail-skirts round his waist,
 And then with buckler raised above his head
 Brought Doomsday with his trenchant scimitar
 Upon the foe who dropped their bows of Cháh,
 And ran. They brought a horse. He mounted raging,
 And shouting charged the centre of the foe—
 The station of the Sháh—and pierced it through :
 The standard of the leader disappeared.
 Thence went he toward the foe’s right and outflanked
 The Persians and the baggage.² Now Gurdví
 Commanded there—a man of valiance
 And of ambition. When he saw his brother
 He strung and drew his bow. Those men of blood
 Closed ; thou hadst said : “ They mingle.” Long
 they strove,
 And neither would give way. Bahrám Chúbína

¹ “ *de sang.* ” Mohl.

² Couplet omitted.

Cried : “ Miscreant ! wherefore girdest thou thy loins
To shed thy brother’s blood ? ”

Gurdwí replied :—

“ Old wolf ! hast thou not heard the weighty saw :—
‘ A brother as a friend is good : forego
Both skin and vein if he become thy foe.’
Thou art a man of blood, a miscreant,
An Áhraman, the Maker’s enemy
At heart. No one of honour and repute
Will come against his brother in the fight.”

C. 1937

Bahrám Chúbína, hearing this, withdrew
In anger and high dudgeon, while Gurdwí,
His martial countenance a-gloom with iron,
Proceeded to the Sháh. Khusráu Parwíz
Commended him right lovingly and said :—
“ May turning heaven reward thee.”

Then the Sháh

Made toward the centre, where his warriors reeled,
And sent one to Shápúr. “ Assist Mausíl,”
He said, “ put forth your power, fight back to back,
And ye may compass shining fortune yet.”

At that time said the king to Gustaham :—
If any Rúman shareth in this fight
Then when Bahrám Chúbína hath been worsted,
Or even wounded, they will raise their heads
Up to the sky and brag immeasurably.
I would not have the Rúmans waxing proud,
And glorying over us about the war.
I have seen all their prowess ; they are like
A flock in Winter. ’Twill be best for me
To fight with him short-handed ; I require not
Aid from another for I trust in God,
The Succourer.”

Said Gustaham : “ O king !
Conspire not thou against thine own sweet life ;
But if thou art determined choose some comrades ;

Wreck not thy person on this battlefield."

Khusrau Parwiz rejoined : " What thou hast said
Is well, so make thy choice of some to help¹
Out of the army."

Gustaham selected

Twice seven Iranian horsemen brave and proud.
He wrote himself down first upon the list,
Then brave Shapur with Andiyán, Bandwi,
Gurdwi—the prop of kings—Ázargashasp,
And then Shírzil, Rangwi who could outface
The lion and the elephant, Tukhára—
A help in fight and to Yalán-sína
A mortal foe—illustrious Khusrau,
And Farrukhzád, Ustád son² of Píruz,
Who caused his enemies to melt away,
Urmuzd and fortunate Khurshid—a pair
To whom their foemen were as grass. Their chief
Was gallant Gustaham expert in war.
On this wise he made choice of fourteen men,
And hurried with them from the host apart.

Khusrau Parwiz harangued those chiefs and said :—

" My noble followers ! look ye all to God,
Be blithe of heart and smiling. Naught will chance
But as He willeth while this ancient sky
Endureth. Better perish in the fight
Than have a slave to rule us. Ye must be
My body-guard and instant in the fray."

All blessed him, hailed him king of earth and vowed
That none of them would quit him in the strife.
The monarch heard, was reassured, rejoiced,
And well contented with those warriors.
He left the host with glorious Bahrám,
And went forth with those fourteen combatants,
While from the look-out rose a shout forthwith :
They told Bahrám Chúbina : " Troops have come."

¹ Reading with P.

² *Id.*

That vigilant aspirant gat to horse
 With lasso in the straps and sword in hand.
 When from his steed he saw the sum of them
 He chose him some few warriors and spake
 Thus to Yalán-sína : “ Yon miscreant
 Hath proved that he is hardy in the fight,
 For now I know that none but he would venture
 Upon this field of vengeance. He hath come
 Attended by a troop like this to battle,
 But it may be to face the crocodile !
 There are not more than twenty cavaliers,
 And not one of them do I recognise ! ”¹

Then to Ízid Gashasp² and to Yalán-sína
 He said : ‘ Men hide not valour. Four of us
 Will do, for fortune is a greater friend
 To me than to Khusrau Parwíz.’

He gave

The host to one hight Jánfurúz, who loved
 The night’s gloom more than day, and then went forth
 Himself and sped on with the wary three.
 Khusrau Parwíz perceived Bahrám Chúbína,
 And told his comrades : “ There hath come a troop.
 Be not perturbed for ‘tis my time to stand.
 Leave it to me and with my mace to deal
 With vile Bahrám Chúbína : be it yours
 To combat with his chiefs. Ye are fourteen
 To three and may ye never see defeat.”

Then with his Rúman soldiers Niyátús
 Must needs gird up the loins and from the field
 Of fight they made their way toward the heights
 To view both companies and all exclaimed :—
 “ Why bartereth the great Sháh life for crown ?
 Abundant horse are left and yet he goeth
 To fight in person recklessly ! ”

All raised

C. 1939

¹ Couplet omitted.

² Reading with P.

Their hands to heaven because they deemed him slain.
 Now when Bahrám Chúbína and his comrades—
 Yalán-sína and brave Ízid Gashasp¹—
 Charged, all the comrades of Khusrau Parwíz
 Took flight. Bahrám Chúbína was the wolf,
 These nobles were the flock and full of dudgeon
 When they beheld that dív escaped from bonds :
 Howbeit Bandwí, Gurdwí, and Gustaham
 Stayed with the Sháh till, with a prayer to God,
 He also, left resourceless, turned his steed,
 Pressed by Ízid Gashasp.² “ My fate,” he said,
 Is on me ! Why in folly did I court
 This Doomsday, for the folk have looked upon
 My back in flight ? ”

Said Gustaham : “ The horsemen
 Approach us : wherefore shouldst thou fight alone ? ”

The Sháh looked back and saw Bahrám Chúbína
 The foremost of the four, and then to save
 Himself cut loose his charger’s sable mail.
 His three³ companion-horsemen lagged behind ;
 His vengeful foe pursued. A narrow gorge
 Confronted him. Behind him warriors three
 Came on like pards. The gorge was barred by rocks.
 The world-lord was afar from his own troops.
 That glorious youth dismounted fain to scale
 Afoot in haste the heights. His path was barred :
 The heart of that famed man was sore thereat.
 He might not tarry and he could not flee,
 While after him came fierce Bahrám Chúbína,
 Who called to him : “ O knave ! the abyss is yawning
 Before thy height of greatness ! Why hast thou
 Thus shouldered thine own fate and brought it me ? ”

Then straitened with the scimitar behind,
 The rocks in front, the Sháh cried : “ God almighty,
 Who art above the processes of time !

Thou art my succour in my helpless strait :
I cry not unto Mercury and Saturn."

Or ever from the mountain rose that cry
Surúsh, the glorious, grew manifest
Upon the pathway, garbed in green and riding
A white steed. At that sight Khusrau Parwíz
Recovered confidence. Surúsh drew near,
And having grasped the prince's hand (such things
Are not a marvel with all-holy God)
And borne him from his foe, placed him in safety,
And then let go his hold.

" What is thy name ? "

Khusrau Parwíz inquired and spake and wept
By turns. He said : " Surúsh. Thou art in safety ;
Lament no more. Henceforth Great King art thou,
And shouldst be naught but holy." C. 1940

Having said,

He vanished : none hath looked on such a marvel.
Bahrám Chúbína saw and, all astound,
Invoked the Maker oft. A trembling came
Upon him when he saw his purpose foiled.
He said : " May pluck ne'er fail me while I fight
With men, but now that it hath come to fays
I needs must weep for my beclouded fortunes."

For his part Niyátús upon the mountain
Asked God's protection, Maryam tore her cheeks
In anguish for her world-lord spouse. The host
Filled mountain, plain, and dale, the Rúmans' hearts
Were grieved and seared. Said Niyátús to her :—
" Stay here ; I fear me that the Sháh is lost."

With that upon the mountain's further side,
Far from the troops, Khusrau Parwíz appeared.
That famed host joyed and Maryam's heart was eased.
He came to her, informed her of that marvel,
And thus he said : " O spouse of Cæsar's line !
The just Judge hath done justice unto me ;

'Twas not through slackness or through cowardice,¹
 For cowards show their slackness in the fight.
 I was companionless within the gorge,
 And in my trouble called upon the Maker,
 And He that ordereth the world's affairs
 Revealed to me, His slave, His hidden purpose.
 Not glorious Farídún or Túr or Salm,
 Or yet Afrásiyáb, e'er dreamed such things,
 For, nobles ! what I looked upon to-day
 Betokeneth victory and sovereignty.
 Renew the struggle and remember me."

§ 26

How Khusrau Parwíz fought the third Time with Bahrám Chúbína and defeated him

Forthwith the host descended from the mountain ;
 The world was blackened by the horsemen's dust.
 Bahrám Chúbína for his part was troubled,
 Repenting all his conduct, but advanced,
 Not having any choice, his powers apace.
 There was no daylight left. He said : " All those
 Commanding troops need wisdom, mastery,
 And courage. Seeing how I ply the dart,
 And have the making of a paladin,
 The brave preferred me to Khusrau Parwíz,
 And I will bring the crown of Núshírwán
 To dust."

Advancing rashly toward the Sháh
 He strung his bow and loosed a whole wood arrow,
 Which in a moment struck the Sháh's belt whence
 It dangled point-arrested by the silk.

¹ "que je me suis enfui." Mohl.

A slave that saw came and extracted it
From the brocade. The Sháh's spear struck his
foe

Upon the belt which was of mail and broke not,
But though the spear-head snapped the usurper
quailed.

The Sháh, indignant that his spear was broken,
Brought down his mace upon his foeman's casque.
The mace's head was broken by the blow,
And stuck upon the crest, while all that saw,
Or heard the iron ring, acclaimed the Sháh,
Whose troops were heartened, for Bahrám Chúbína
Had had a check, who, when the sun and moon
Loured on him, turned reluctantly away,
Aware how hard his task had grown—one past
Both prowess and endeavour. The Sháh's host,
When they beheld his lion-manlihood,
All—Rúmans and Íránians—unsheathed
The sword of vengeance and charged mountain-like
In mass. The magnates followed in his steps,
And utterly o'erthrew those mighty powers.
Bandwí came to the Sháh and said : “ O thou,
Whose crown is higher than the sky and moon !
This host like ants and locusts is dispersed
Upon the plain, the sands, and stony ground.
It is unworthy to shed needless blood,
And for the Sháh to strive against his slave.
'Tis better that they should appeal to us
For quarter than be slain or maimed in fight.”

Khusrau Parwíz replied : “ I seek not vengeance
On any that repent. I grant them grace ;
They are the earrings of my crown.”

Night's flag

Rose o'er the darksome hills, both hosts withdrew,
The sentries challenged, bells rang, and the troops
Had little sleep. Bandwí, the ambitious, went

Between the hosts, chose from the troops a chief—
 A herald fluent, with a goodly voice—
 Bade him to mount upon his Arab steed,
 And make him ready to proclaim. They rode
 Between the hosts till close upon the foe,
 And then the herald shouted : “ O ye slaves,
 In fault yourselves and followers of fortune !
 By God ! the Sháh will pardon all, e'en those
 That have done worst and in the war achieved
 Most fame, be their faults patent or concealed.”

C. 1942

The sound went through the darkness of the night,

And all gave ear. Bahrám Chúbína's chiefs
 Girt up their loins to quit him. When the sun
 Rose o'er the hills, and day spread taffeta
 Upon the ground, the tents upon the plain
 Were all abandoned, but Bahrám Chúbína
 Was not aware of what had passed that night.
 None but his friends were to be seen in camp.
 On hearing of the troops he visited
 The tents and told his comrades : “ To retreat
 Is better now than waking on a Doomsday.”

He bade the master of his camels furnish
 Two thousand lusty and foam-scattering,
 And all his treasures that were portable,
 The hangings and the carpets and the plate
 Of gold and silver, with the ivory thrones,
 The golden torques, the armlets and the crowns,
 They loaded up and then themselves took seat
 Upon their steeds and girt them for retreat.

§ 27

*How Khusrau Parwíz sent an Army under Nastúh¹
after Bahrám Chúbína, and how Bahrám Chúbína
captured him and reached the Khán of Chin*

Whenas the bright sun had arrayed its throne
Exploring parties went out from the Sháh ;
They found the chieftain's tent unoccupied,
While of the other tents not many stood.
The scouts came in and told Khusrau Parwíz,
Who grieved the more about that battlefield.²
He choose three thousand cavaliers in mail
On barded steeds, then bade Nastúh to mount,
And gird his warlike loins for the pursuit.
He went in dudgeon ; he was not the man
To fight Bahrám Chúbína who the while,
Uncertain of his kingdom and his rights,
Kept with himself his silver and his gold,
And marched all fearful by a trackless route.
Yalán-sína and brave Ízid Gashasp
Rode by the soldiers' side conducting them
Along those wayless ways and as they went
Told stories of the Sháhs. They saw afar
A ruined hamlet where no chief could dwell,
And as Bahrám Chúbína rode ahead,
Remorseful and in dudgeon, he and all
His men athirst, he found a carline's cot.
In courteous terms they asked for bread and water.
She brought a worn-out sieve, laid down a sheep-skin,
All tattered, and set out upon the sieve
Dry bread. Yalán-sína then handed him
The sacred twigs who thought not in his grief

C. 1943

¹ Reading with P.² Because Bahrám Chúbína had escaped.

Of muttering prayer.¹ They ate, then asked for wine,
And prayed.

“ If ye would have wine,” said the crone,
There is some, and I have too an old gourd,
The end of which I cut off even now,
Have made a cup, and set it by the wine.”

Bahrám Chúbína said : “ If wine is there,
What better cup could be ? ”

She went and fetched them,
And he was well content to use that cup.
He gave it brimming to her that she might
Be festive too, and said : “ My gracious mother !
What tidings hast thou of the world’s affairs ? ”

“ My brain is worn out, I have heard so much,”
She answered. “ Many came from town to-day,
And talked but of Bahrám Chúbína’s battle,
How all his troops deserted to the Sháh,
And how the chief fled hostless.”

“ Pious dame ! ”
He answered, “ say if he hath acted wisely
Or followed his desires.”

“ Famed man ! ” she said,
“ How is it that the Div hath dimmed thine eyes ?
Dost thou not know that since Bahrám Chúbína,
Son of Gashasp, urged on his steed against
Khusrau Parwíz, son of Hurmuzd, the sages
Laugh at him ? None accounteth him a chief.”

Bahrám Chúbína said : “ Since his desires
Have made him quaff wine from a gourd do thou
Keep barley-bread for him on this old sieve
Until next barley-harvest.”²

¹ Couplet omitted.

² *i.e.* “ Since I have been led into wrong-doing by my desires let me continue to fare badly”—words put into Bahrám Chúbína’s mouth by the author or redactor of the Romance. This is another instance of the legitimist feeling pervading this portion of the poem. See Vol. vi. p. 251.

Having eaten
He passed withal the night there in his tunic,
His shoulders on his breastplate, but sleep came not:
He found no rest—to vain desires a prey.

Whenas the sun in heaven made secrets clear
The warlike chieftain had the tabor sounded,
What troops he had he gathered, and those nobles
Set forth and came upon a goodly reed-bed,
And many folk were harvesting the reeds,
Who when they saw afar Bahrám Chúbína
With his large body of determined men,
Said : “ Blest be thou ! Why take the reed-bed thus ?
In front are many troops with hands blood-bathed
For fight.”

C. 1944

“ They must be horse,” he made reply,
“ Sent by the king. I heard, when we resolved
To quit our camp, that he had chosen Nastúh,
A man ambitious but inapt, to lead
Three thousand cavaliers—stiff opposites
In battle—in pursuit of us. When I
Behold him I will end his days. Now tighten
Your girths and ring him in.”

The cavaliers

Drew tight their girths and grasped their Indian
swords.

They fired the reed-bed and o'erthrew their foes :
That bed of reeds was utterly consumed,
This man was slain, that burnt. Bahrám Chúbína,
The warrior, perceived Nastúh and gave
His fleet steed rein, and with the lasso's noose
Unhorsed Nastúh whose feckless hands they bound.
He begged for quarter, saying : “ Famous king !
Why wish to shed my blood ? Compassionate
My luckless fortune. Slay me not that I
May run before thee and approve myself
Thy wretched mendicant.”

Bahrám Chúbína

Replied : “ I would not carry from the field
 Of fight such men as thee. I will not sever
 Thy head because I shame at having fought
 A cavalier like thee. When thou art set
 At liberty be off with you and tell
 Khusrau Parwíz what thou hast seen of me.”

Nastúh, on hearing, kissed the ground and gave
 Abundant thanks. This done, Bahrám Chúbína
 Departed with his warriors good at need
 To Rai, reposed, then sought the Khán with speed.

§ 28

*How Khusrau Parwíz pillaged the Camp of Bahrám
 Chúbína and wrote a Letter to Cæsar who
 answered it with a Robe of Honour and Gifts*

C. 1945 Khusrau Parwíz on his side visited
 Bahrám Chúbína’s lines and pillaged them,
 Bestowing on his soldiers purse and crown.
 He mounted a fleet steed and girt himself
 For prayer. Before him was a bramble-brake.
 He entered that befitting place afoot,
 And wallowed in the dust before his God.
 “ O righteous Judge ! ” he said, “ Thou hast delivered
 The country from the burden of the foe,
 And hast surpassed our whole imaginings.
 I am thy worshipper and worthless slave :
 I walk according to the Lord’s command.”
 Thence he returned to camp ; his counsellors
 Assembled, and he called a scribe to write
 A letter out on silk from Sháh to Cæsar,
 Detailing what had passed in that campaign.

He first praised God—the Source of manliness,
 Of prowess, and success, then said : “ In secret
 Much hath God favoured me. I and my host
 Came to Ázargashasp. I hurried onward,
 Returning for the fight. Bahrám Chúbína
 So pressed me that I had not room to strive ;
 But when all-holy God ceased to assist
 My foe the flaming blast of war died out,
 And with resources failing and with troops
 Deserting he withdrew at break of day.
 I have destroyed his whole host, fired his camp,
 And intercepted too by God’s behest
 His line of march.”

They set upon the letter
 The Sháh’s seal, and the messengers departing
 Bare it to famous Cæsar’s court where he,
 Whose fortune was awake, on reading it,
 Descended from his throne and cried to God :—
 “ O Guide ! Thou changest never. Thou hast made
 Thy slave triumphant and restored the outcast.”

He lavished alms and provand by the ass-load,
 And wrote withal an answer like a tree
 In Paradise, beginning : “ In the name
 Of God, the Lord of victory, of Grace,
 And justice, Lord of moon and sun and might.
 Know thou that greatness and good fortune come
 From Him, what while thou livest give Him praise,
 And in this world in public and in private
 Ensue but justice and beneficence.”

He sent a crown—an heirloom of the Cæsars,
 Reserved for fit occasions—with a pair
 Of earrings and a royal torque, of robes
 Eleven hundred broidered all in gold,
 A hundred camel-loads of gold dínárs,
 As well as many pearls and precious stones,
 A jewelled cross and throne all royal gems,

C. 1946

A green robe shot with gold whereof the fringe
 Was finished off with jewels. With the gifts
 And offerings went four philosophers
 Of those of Rúm. Khusrau Parwíz dispatched
 A thousand cavaliers of noble birth
 To meet and welcome them. Those magnates
 reached

With their new gifts Khusrau Parwíz in safety,
 Who, having viewed them and perused the letter,
 Was lost in wonder at that wealth and said
 To his own minister : "These robes of Rúm,
 Adorned with jewelry are not the wear
 Of wealthy thanes but Christian priests ! If we
 Have Crosses on our dress we shall conform
 To Christian fashion. If I wear them not
 'Twill anger Cæsar who will of a truth
 Misconstrue me, while if I put them on
 The magnates all will say : "This king of men
 Perchance hath turned a Christian for wealth's sake,
 Because he is all Cross.

His counsellor

Replied : "O Sháh ! clothes constitute not Faith.
 Though Cæsar be thy kin thy Faith is still
 That of Zarduhsh, the Prophet."

Then he donned

Those royal robes, hung up the jewelled crown,
 Bade raise the curtain, and bring in the envoys.
 Both Rúmans and Írániens crowded in
 Without distinction. When the sages saw
 The Sháh's attire they knew that he desired
 To pleasure Cæsar, others said that he
 Had of a truth turned Christian privily.

§ 29

How Niyátús was wroth with Bandwí and how Maryam made Peace between them

Next day Khusrau Parwíz prepared his throne,
And donned his crown of state. The festal board
Was spread within the rosary. “Invite,”
He said, “the Rúmans.”

C. 1947

Niyátús arrived

With the other Rúmans and they took their seats
Before the board with the philosophers.

Now when Khusrau Parwíz came from his throne
Of audience in the jewelled robes from Rúm,
Advanced with smiles and sat down at the board,
Bandwí came quickly, sacred twigs in hand.
The world-lord took them with intent to join
The other nobles in their muttered prayers,¹
While Niyátús, on seeing that, threw down
His bread and all disordered left the board,
Exclaiming : “Muttered prayer and Cross at once
Insulteth Christ through Cæsar !”

Seeing this

Bandwí, still at the board, back-handed smote
That servant of the Cross upon the face.
Khusrau Parwíz was grieved, beholding this ;
His cheeks grew like the flower of fenugreek.
He said to Gustaham : “This valiant fool
Should wrangle not when drinking. What hath he
To do with Rúman Niyátús ? He recked not
His person in this quarrel.”

Niyátús,

Departing, mounted and returned half drunk
To camp. He donned his Rúman mail and thought

¹ See Vol. i. p. 80.

To mar that feast. The Rúman cavaliers,
 All eager for the fray, set face to where
 Khusrau Parwíz held court, and Niyátús
 Sent on a cavalier of Rúman race
 Withal to go like wind to him and say :—
 “ Bandwí, the worthless, with a back-hand blow
 Smote on the cheek God’s servant. Now if thou
 Wilt send him to me—well. If not, expect
 A tumult of the folk. Thou wilt writhe more
 At me than at the slave¹ ambitioning
 The throne of king of kings.”

Khusrau Parwíz

Was wroth on hearing this. “ None should ignore
 The Faith of God,” he said. “ From Gaiúmart
 And from Jamshíd to Kai Kubád none spake
 Of Christ, and God forbid that I shall quit
 My fathers’ Faith, those world-lords choice and holy,
 Adopt the Faith of Christ, and murmur not
 A prayer at meals but be a Christian !
 If thou wilt take account thou art alone :
 I saw of late what Rúman prowess is ! ”

C. 1948

Then Maryam spake thus to Khusrau Parwíz :—
 “ I will abate the brawling of these folk.
 Commit illustrious Bandwí to me,
 So that the Rúmans may contemplate him
 From head to foot. I will restore him whole.
 None ever made a point of senseless strife.”

The king dispatched Bandwí to Niyátús,
 Escorted by ten horsemen, with Maryam,
 That prudent lady on whose lips good counsel
 Ne’er failed. He said : “ Approach thy father’s
 brother,
 And say : ‘ Thou quarrelsome, ill-meaning man !
 Hast thou not seen how Cæsar hath assisted
 The Sháh to majesty, hath fought his battles,

¹ Bahrám Chúbína.

Hath made affinity and league with him,
 And furnished men and means and hoarded treasures ?
 Wilt thou destroy affinity and league,
 And take away from me the Grace of Cæsar,
 Who told thee that the Sháh would not abandon
 His Faith on his return ? Why speak raw words ?
 Now take Bandwí's head to thy breast and utter
 No word ungracious. Give not to the winds
 The toil and work of Cæsar, and God grant
 That thou mayst not recall my words too late.”

She went and spake to that effect. Her cheeks
 Were like a rose in bloom, and Niyátús,
 Who thought her words of profit, took her counsel.
 He pacified his heart about Bandwí,
 And shamed on his account, at sight of him
 Arose and bade his treasurer bring forth
 A noble led horse and received Bandwí
 With smiles and welcome, and they visited
 The king together. When Khusrau Parwíz
 Saw Niyátús he said : “ The heart of one
 Of ill condition seeketh not for good.
 Bandwí hath ne'er ensued but strife and tumult :
 Make not the world both dark and strait to me ;
 Give not the toil of Cæsar to the wind
 In passion ; let me have a moment's joy.¹
 If he hath spoken ill of thy religion
 Expect not wisdom from a foolish man.”

“ Expect not wisdom from a Rúman drunk,
 O Sháh ! ” said Niyátús. “ Keep thy sires' Faith,
 For wise men change not such.”

When in this strain
 Much talk had passed he sought his camp again.

¹ Two couplets omitted.

§ 30

How Khusrau Parwiz gave Presents to Niyátús and the Rúmans, how he dismissed them to Rúm, and wrote Patents for the Nobles of Irán

C. 1949 The Sháh then bade Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
 “ Hold a review and call a court. Let all
 The Rúman troops be mustered, young and old.
 Bestow on them two thirds of all my treasures ;
 They must feel well content with what we give.”

For all deserving of a robe of honour
 By prowess shown in fight he bade make ready
 Such, and to requisition splendid steeds
 From his own court. He gave to Niyátús
 Such jewels, steeds and handmaids girt with gold
 That they exceeded measure and surpassed
 Withal what potentates were used to give.
 All cities taken by Kubád from Rúm,
 Or captured by Hurmuzd and Núshírwán
 Of glorious birth, he gave to Niyátús,
 Had patents drawn for them and filled the cup
 Of colocynth with honey. Then the Rúmans
 Set forth for Rúm, that prosperous coast and land.
 The great Khusrau Parwíz escorted them
 Two stages, farewelled Niyátús, and then
 Turned back. Next week he took ten cavaliers,
 Both shrewd and true to him, and quitting camp
 Fared to Ázargashasp. On seeing the dome
 He lighted down and went afoot, his eyes
 All wet, his cheeks sun-yellow. When he passed
 The portal and approached the Fire his visage
 Was hidden by his tears. There he recited
 The Zandavasta for a se'nnight's space,¹

¹ Reading with P.

And humbly danced attendance on the Fire,
 Departing on the eighth day for the feast
 Of Sada was at hand. As he had promised
 Before his lords he gave his share of spoil,
 Of gold and silver, jewel-work, and gems
 Fit for a monarch, to the Fire. He gave
 Drachms to the poor abundantly and left
 No one dissatisfied throughout the land.
 He went thence to the country of Andív
 To have his portion in the day of joy :
 That province was the salt waste's boundary,
 And none could put a value on the soil.
 Within the palace built by Núshírwán,
 Who dwelt there much, he had a splendid suite
 Of rooms prepared, the golden throne arrayed,
 And then the conquering, God-fearing world-lord
 Came and sat down upon his grandsire's seat,
 And bade a scribe and his own minister—
 A helpful archimage—attend. They wrote
 Out patents for the Iránians as the Great
 And Mighty used to do. Bandví, the chief.
 The well advised, the veteran, managed all.
 The Sháh gave Khurásán to Gustaham,
 And bade him reinstate both law and justice,
 Assisted by Burzmihr, the experienced scribe
 Of beauteous face, and since heaven favoured him
 Bestowed by grant Istakhr and Dárábgird.
 He set his golden signet on the patent,
 Then handed it to Rám Barzín forthwith,
 And bade him bear it to Shápúr to whom
 He gave withal both slaves and robe of honour.
 He bade convey a patent under seal
 To Andiyán, as was the royal use,
 And gave him all the country of Kirmán
 Because Khusrau Parwíz esteemed him great.
 He gave another province to Gurdví,

C. 1950

And sealed the letter with the golden seal.
 He gave Bálwí the town of Chách and sent
 The patent with an ivory throne. He counted
 The treasury-keys and to Tukhára's son
 Committed them. The monarch of the world,
 This matter ended, turned to folk at large,
 And bade the chieftains all obey Kharrád,
 Son of Barzín, whose rule should be world-wide,
 And name be countersigned on every patent.
 The soldiers all that in the time of action
 Held by the famous king were given from him
 A robe of honour and dismissed with joy.
 A herald fluent and a chief withal
 Of sweet voice and shrewd heart went round pro-
 claiming :—

“ O ye, the subjects of the king of earth !
 Praise justice only, seek not vengeance, shed
 Not blood, and prompt not unto deeds of ill.
 If any of our subjects be aggrieved,
 Or injured by the troops, the wrongers' place
 Shall be the gibbet here and penal fire
 Hereafter. Ye are all lords of the treasure
 That cometh to you from your proper toil.
 Enjoy and give away, ye that have means !
 And ye that have none ! ask. In every city
 We have a treasure through our fathers' travail,
 Or ours, and we have bidden the treasurer
 Give food and clothes withal to such as lack.
 When food is requisite they shall receive
 From him three mans¹ at dawn upon condition
 That they shall make thanksgiving and shall
 strive
 To keep the earth in culture.”

Through his justice
 The world became a Paradise on high,

¹ “ trois man de blé.” Mohl. Cf. Vol. i. p. 290 note.

And one may well acclaim Khusrav Parwíz,
For better is a great king of that kind
Than one impure albeit sage in mind.¹

§ 31

Firdausi's Lament for the Death of his Son

At sixty-five 'tis ill to catch at pelf.
Oh ! let me read that lesson to myself,
And muse upon the passing of my son.
My turn it was and yet the youth hath gone,
While I for sorrow am as soulless clay.
I will make haste, perchance o'ertake, and say
Reproachfully : " My turn it was to go ;
Why hast thou gone then 'gainst my will and so
Robbed me of all my peace ? Thou didst abate
My cares ; why hast thou left thine agéd mate ?
Didst thou perchance find younger company
That lightly thus thou hast abandoned me ? "

Seven years and thirty o'er the youth had sped
When he distasted of the world and fled.
Harsh comrade proved he of my pilgrimage,
And, having turned his back on me in rage,
Went, but he left me his calamities,
His griefs, a full heart, and blood-weeping eyes.
Now whither he hath passed he doth aspire
To choose a habitation for his sire
In Light. Since then a weary time hath gone,
And of his way-mates hath returned not one.
Good sooth ! he looketh for me wrathfully
Because I loiter. Five and sixty I,
He thirty-seven. He asked not agéd me,

¹ In the above passage the last couplet of the section is read with P. before the two preceding ones.

But hurried off alone. I stayed to see
 The outcome of my labours. May God grace
 Thy soul with light and wisdom's breastplate place
 Before thy life. It is my prayer that He,
 Who giveth all and ruleth righteously,
 The Holy, will forgive each fault of thine,
 And cause thy moon now overcast to shine.

§ 32

The Story of Bahrám Chúbína and the Khán of Chín

C. 1952

Tell now old tales, tell of Bahrám Chúbína.
 When he drew near the country of the Turks,
 Toward the Lions and the Khán, there went
 Ten thousand shrewd and wary cavaliers,
 Led by the son and brother of the Khán,
 Each with a priest as counsellor, to meet him.
 On reaching the Khán's throne Bahrám Chúbína
 Gave praises to him and did reverence.
 The Khán, upon beholding him, rose, kissed,
 And stroked caressingly, his face, inquiring
 At large about the travail of the way,
 And of his warfare with the Sháh and host,
 Then gave a welcome to Ízid Gashasp
 Withal and to Yalán-sína—those chiefs
 No longer hostile. When Bahrám Chúbína
 Was seated on the silvern throne he took
 In his the Khán's hand, saying: “Glorious prince,
 The captain and ruler of the Turks
 Of Chín ! thou know'st that no one is secure
 Within the world by reason of malign
 Khusrau Parwíz who vexeth those that fain
 Would rest from toil and doubleth it for those

That live at ease. If now thou wilt accept me,
 And be mine aid in good and evil, I
 Will be thy comrade in this priceless land,
 And friend in good and ill, while shouldst thou suffer
 Through me I will depart and seek a cistern
 Elsewhere, and if thou wilt have none of me
 Then I will journey unto Hindústán."

The Khán said : " Noble chieftain ! never mayst
 Thou need that day. Like mine own kin will I
 Hold thee. My kin ? Nay, better than my child.
 My whole land will co-operate with me
 Herein, both lord and liege. Pre-eminence
 I give thee o'er my chiefs and furthermore
 I make thee independent of my lords."

Bahrám Chúbína further asked an oath
 To bind his soul, for so far all was tongue.

The Khán said : " By the most high God, the Guide
 Of me and thee, I am thy mate indeed,
 What while I live, and friend for good and ill."

Thereafter they prepared two palaces,
 And furnished them with vessels of all kinds.
 Slaves, food, and raiment, needful carpeting,
 With serviceable plate of gold and silver,
 Dínárs and royal jewelry, the Khán
 Sent to Bahrám Chúbína whose dark soul
 Grew bright, and save with whom the Khán went not
 To polo, the assembly, and the chase,
 Remaining in this mind and lauding him.

C. 1953

The Khán possessed a chief who was his friend,
 His help in war and of a stronger nature,¹
 Named Makátúra, by whose means the Khán
 Had won success and fame. He used to visit
 The Khán at dawn with fingers on his lips,
 For thus did subjects offer reverence,
 To those illustrious potentates of Chín,

¹ " un homme de plus haute naissance que le prince." Mohl.

And each time from the veteran monarch's treasure
Would carry fifty score dinárs away.

Bahrám Chúbína marked this for a while,
Astonied at the Khán, then laughed and said
One day : " Exalted one ! thou art esteemed
Among the potentates, yet every morn
At audience-time this Turk thus bareth off
These fifty score dinárs ! If he receiveth
A mine 'tis not for rendered services,¹

The Khán replied : " This is a way of ours—
The glory of our Faith—that all our bravest,
And stanchest on the day of stress, should meet
With no refusal when they ask for more,
And plead with importunity. His power
Is more than mine. I charm him with dinárs.
If I refused the troops would mutiny,
And dim my shining day."

Bahrám Chúbína,

The world-aspirant, said : " O king of men !
Thou hast made him a master o'er thyself.
When world-lords are both valiant and alert
They must not let a subject have the reins.
If I should rid thee of him wouldest thou be
Well pleased or dost thou care for his support ? "

" 'Tis thine to order this," replied the Khán,
" And thine to plan and compass this desire.
If thou canst free me from him thou wilt bring
The question to an end."

" To-morrow morn,"

He made reply, " when Makátúra cometh
For his dinárs, smile not, regard him not,
And answer not or, if at all, in wrath."

That night passed and at dawn came Makátúra
Before the Khán. That world-lord neither saw him,

¹ " Que ce soit un cadeau, que ce soit sa paye, faut-il donc que sa part soit tout l'or d'une mine ? " *Id.*

Nor heard what that bold Turk had got to say,
 Who, angered, raged and glared at him, and cried :—
 “ Why is it that to-day I have grown vile,
 My lord ? Assuredly this Persian prince,
 Who reached our land with thirty friends, is striving
 To turn thee from the right and would consign
 Thine army to the wind.”

C. 1954

Bahrám Chúbína

Replied : “ O warrior ! why so fierce in talk ?
 I, if the Khán will follow mine advice,
 And prudently regard our covenant,
 Will let not thee come hither every morn
 To waste his treasures with impunity.
 Thou mayest be three hundred cavaliers,
 And hunt the Lions on the battlefield ;
 It followeth not that thou each morn shouldst come,
 And claim dínárs by ass-loads from the king.”

When Makátúra heard his head became
 All vengeful at Bahrám Chúbína’s scheme.
 In wrath and passion he put forth his hand,
 And plucked a poplar arrow from his quiver.
 “ This is my token and interpreter
 In battle,” said he to Bahrám Chúbína,
 “ So look out for my point when thou shalt come
 To court to-morrow morn.”

On hearing this
 Bahrám Chúbína, growing mettlesome,
 Gave him a poplar arrow tipped with steel,
 And said : “ Receive this keepsake and observe
 Its usefulness.”

Then Makátúra went
 Forth from the Khán and hurried to his tent.

§ 33

How Makátúra was slain by Bahrám Chúbína

When night withdrew its sombre skirt, and dawn
 Brake o'er the gloomy mountains, Makátúra
 Put on his battle-armour and went forth,
 Túránian sword in hand. Bahrám Chúbína,
 On hearing, called for steed and royal breastplate.
 The spot they chose was one whose plain and waste
 No leopards e'er resorted to for fight.

The Khán, on hearing, mounted on his steed,
 And went accompanied by the loyal Turks
 To see which raging Lion of the twain
 Would have the better fortune. Makátúra,
 On coming to the scene of strife, dispatched
 Dust cloudward from the plain and shouted thus
 To haught Bahrám Chúbína : “ What hast thou
 To say of manhood now ? Wilt thou begin,
 Or shall the loyal, lion-hearted Turk ? ”

Bahrám Chúbína said : “ Begin thyself,
 For thou didst start this quarrel by thy words.”

Then Makátúra called on God and strung
 His bow, grasped joyfully the string and arrow,
 Drew to the point and then released his thumb.
 He struck the cavalier upon the belt,
 But that bright iron point pierced not the mail.
 Bahrám Chúbína held aloof awhile
 That Makátúra might grow tired of fight,
 Who, thinking that his enemy was shent,
 Turned shouting from the field.

“ O warrior ! ”

Bahrám Chúbína cried, “ thou hast not slain me ;
 Depart not to thy tent. Thy say is said ;
 Stop and hear my reply and, if thou livest

When thou hast heard it, go.”

With that he chose
 A breastplace-piercing shaft of poplar-wood,
 One to which stone and iron were as wax,
 And hit the valiant horseman on the girdle.
 That chief grew satiate of dínárs and fight,
 And wept and slept upon his bast-bound saddle,
 For he, on mounting for the fray, had tied
 His two feet to the saddle and thus kept
 His seat though wounded, while his wounder rode
 Up to the Khán and said : “ Imperious !
 Yon noble needeth one to dig his grave.”

The Khán said : “ Look more closely. He is
 swooning,
 But living on the saddle.”

Thus replied
 Bahrám Chúbína : “ Puissant sovereign !
 His body cometh even now to dust.
 May all thy foemen swoon as he is swooning
 On his Túránián steed.”

The valiant Khán
 Dispatched a cavalier to that famed Lion,
 Whom they saw bound, slain vilely, and released
 From fate’s vicissitudes. The Khán thereat
 Laughed to himself in secret, wondering
 At that chief horseman of the world’s exploit ;
 Then full of thought returned to his own palace
 With crown that soared to Saturn in his joy.
 He called for arms and drachms, for steeds and slaves,
 Gemmed trinketry, imperial crown, dínárs,
 King-worthy jewels, and all kinds of gear
 Of war. These from the Khán a messenger
 Bare to Bahrám Chúbína’s treasurer.

§ 34

How the Lion-ape slew a Daughter of the Khán, how it was slain by Bahrám Chúbina, and how the Khán gave him a Daughter and the Kingdom of Chín

C. 1956

Time passed and peace was tutor night and day.
 There were at that time in the hills of Chín
 Wild animals past count. One was a beast
 Out-bulking horses and upon its head
 Were two black locks like cables. It was tawny
 Of body while its ears and throat were black.
 None saw it save at noon-tide and it had
 Two claws resembling those of mighty lions.
 Its roar rose o'er the clouds, it swallowed stones,
 And turned the day of mighty men to gloom.
 Folk called it "Lion-ape:"¹ the land was all
 Confounded at the ill it wrought. The Khán
 Possessed a moon-like daughter, had the moon
 Two raven locks, two rubious lips, a nose
 As 'twere a silvèn reed, two smiling cheeks²
 Of coral, and dark eyes. Her parents used
 To weep for terror lest the sun should strike her.
 One day she went forth to the plain and roamed
 The meadows while the Khán, the world-lord, followed
 The chase elsewhere. The queen was in the palace
 Engaged in converse with a counsellor.
 Thus went her daughter to that meadow-land
 With other damsels, wine, and revellers.
 The lion-ape descried her from the heights,
 Descended to the plain and gulped her down:³
 That fair-cheeked damsel ended in a breath.
 The Khán heard and his face turned black, his queen

¹ "Sher-kappí" which Mohl translates "le lion Keppi."

² "deux lèvres" (Mohl) but they have just been mentioned.

³ Cf. Vol. v, p. 233 and *note*.

Tore out her hair : they mourned the maid for years,
 As if they had been burning in fierce flames,
 And sought to slay the monster and relieve
 Chín from that stress. Now when Bahrám Chúbína
 Fought with and sent the dust from Makátúra
 The queen went forth to watch him and discoursed
 To all about his prowess. Meeting him
 One day with five score nobles of Írán,
 And many men on foot preceding him,
 While he rode with a counsellor, she asked :—
 “ Who is this with such height and Grace divine ? ”

A servant answered : “ Thou hast much to learn,
 Not knowing brave Bahrám Chúbína’s name !
 He once was Sháh within Írán ; his crown,
 Out-topped the moon. Chiefs title him ‘ Bahrám
 The brave,’ for he hath borne the fame of valour
 From other kings, and now that he hath quitted
 Írán for Chín earth quaketh ’neath his charger.
 Our sovereign would have him for a chief,
 So setteth on his head a royal crown.”

She thus made answer : “ Since his Grace is such
 Well may we nestle underneath his wings,
 And well may I request a boon of him ;
 He will not act with slackness like the Khán,
 But venge me on the monster when he heareth
 The reason for my grief and malisons.”

C. 1957

He answered : “ If the queen of upright folk
 Will speak to him she will not find a trace
 Left of the lion-ape except a corpse
 Dragged by the feet by wolves.”

She heard and joyed :
 Pain for her daughter left her. She made haste
 To see the Khán and tell him all. He said :—
 “ Where there is horseman such as I, and where
 A lion-ape hath battened on my child,
 ’Twere shame for us to tell it ; ’twould disgrace

My stock. Bahrám Chúbína knoweth not
 That that terrific monster will make budge
 An iron mountian with its breath. Although
 The daughter of a king be famed life too
 Is dear to him."

She said : " I want revenge
 For her who was mine Eye, so speak I will,
 Shame or no shame, and haply gain mine end."

Much time thus passed away. She kept her rancour
 A secret. Now the Khán chanced to prepare
 A feast and summoned thereunto his chiefs.
 He sent and called the brave Bahrám Chúbína,
 And seated him upon the silvern throne.
 Now when the queen behind her curtains heard
 She entered quickly, saw the hero, praised
 And blessed him much, and said to him : " May Chín
 And Turkistán be prosperous through thee !
 Fain would I ask a favour of my lord ;
 May he accord it me."

He said : " 'Tis thine
 To order and to will and win thy wish."

She said : " Near by there is a meadow-land—
 The very spot for feasting—and therein
 The youths of Chín keep merrymake each Spring.
 A bow-shot past the wood thou mayst behold
 A mount more black than pitch. Upon that mount
 Of flint there is a monster, and the realm
 Of Chín is in distress because of it.
 A lion-ape I term it for I know not
 What else to call it. By the Khán I had
 A daughter whom the sun was wont to praise.
 She left the palace for that feasting-place
 What while the Khán was hunting with his men.
 Came from the mountain that ferocious monster,
 And gulped down her that was our very Eye.
 Now every Spring it visiteth that meadow

In quest of prey. No youth or paladin
 Of any name is left in this our city
 Since through the mischief of this lion-ape
 They have been slaughtered, and it hath sent up
 The dust from this fair land. Our cavaliers
 Of war and men of action have gone forth
 In numbers to that mountain-height but when
 They see afar the monster's claws and breast,
 Its back, its shoulders, ears and head, it roareth
 And shattereth those warriors' hearts, for what
 Are lions, tigers, crocodiles thereto ?
 No counter of the cost will venture near.”

Bahrám Chúbína said : “ At dawn to-morrow
 I will go forth and view this pleasure-ground,
 And by the strength and might that God hath given,
 The exalted Fashioner of sun and moon,
 I will relieve the pleasance of this monster
 If some will guide me thither when 'tis dawn.”

Whenas the moon's disk shone forth from the sky,
 And dark night shook abroad its dusky locks,
 They broke up and departed on their ways,
 Bemused, each to his palace. When the glory
 Of golden Sol appeared and plaited up
 Night's azure tresses, brave Bahrám Chúbína
 Put on his gambeson and then committed
 His honoured form to God. He took his lasso,
 His bow, a hundred shafts and one forked dart
 As used in hunting. When he neared the height
 He bade his retinue turn back, and when
 Hard on the lion-ape thou wouldest have said :
 “ The mount loured o'er him.” There mid rocks of
 flint
 He girt himself and mounted on his saddle,
 Armed with his coiled up lasso, plied his bow
 And strung it, called on God who giveth good,
 Sent up his battle-cry, and smote the rocks

Until they flashed again. The lion-ape
 Was in a pool. It wallowed and came forth,
 For when the monster's fell was soaked no shaft
 Availed against it. That grim monster came
 To gulp Bahrám Chúbína down. That hero
 Shot and the body of the lion-ape
 Had fight enough. He shot again and smote
 The monster on the head; the blood poured down
 Like water o'er its breast. He marked the strength
 And onset of the monster, shot again,
 Transfixed its claw, then loosed his lasso, leapt
 Upon that lofty mountain-top and speared
 The creature's loins; the flints were dyed with blood.
 Then reaching for his scimitar he clave
 The monster's form in twain, cut off its head,
 And flung it down contemptuously, descended,
 Came to the Khán, rejoicing, and proclaimed
 What had befallen the ape. The Khán and queen
 Set forward to the wood and made all haste
 To reach the mountain-top while acclamation,
 Such that thou wouldest have said: "The earth is
 rent"
 Rose from the warriors of Chín. They praised
 Bahrám Chúbína and showered gold and jewels
 Abundantly upon him while the chief
 Of Chín embraced him and bestowed on him
 Thenceforth the style of king, and having reached
 The palace chose a trusty messenger,
 And sent a hundred purses full of drachms,
 With slaves and robes, and bade a scribe attend.
 They wrote a patent out for Chín on silk.
 The Khán at that time gave Bahrám Chúbína
 His daughter to secure his staying there.
 As was their custom they made ready robes
 Of honour, many crowns and belts. The Khán
 Said to Bahrám Chúbína: "These bestow

C. 1959

On such Iránians as are worthy of them."

Bahrám Chúbína took to feast and chase,
Untroubled by the passing on of time ;
The noblest of the cavaliers of Chín
Were his petitioners, and all Chín said :—
" We are thy slaves and only live for thee,"
While he mid feast and largess passed his days,
And all folk too united in his praise.

§ 35

How Khusrav Parwiz heard of the Case of Bahrám Chúbína and wrote a Letter to the Khán, and how he replied

Thus matters fared till tidings reached Irán,
Reached the great monarch of the brave : " A king-
ship
And treasure greater than thine own are now
Bahrám Chúbína's and untoiled for ! "

Vexed

And troubled by solicitude, his heart
Wrung by the doings of Bahrám Chúbína,
He held consult with his own magnates, spake,
Discussing all expedients, and at night
Called for a scribe and made an arrow-head
His pen-point. To the Khán of Chín he wrote
A letter, and thou wouldest have said : " He made
His sword the pen."

He first praised God, " the One,
The Guide to good, who setteth up on high
Sun, moon, and Saturn, who enthroneth kings,
Who pricketh sinners and increaseth Grace.
By ignorance, by knowledge, by uprightness,

And by perversity, by harm and loss,
 'Tis owned that He is One and hath no comrade,
 No peer, no mate. Whoever seeketh good
 Shall find it but so may not he whose hands
 Are steeped in ill, and he that maketh choice
 Of God's way must forgo ingratitude."

He then said thus : " Bahrám Chúbína (may
 He ne'er in this world see his wishes won !)
 Was an ungrateful servant to the Sháh,
 Ignoring both his master and his God.
 He was of small account, unfamed and weak,
 Till my sire took him up when season served ;
 But when the monarch of the world thus raised him
 He only did according to his nature :
 His conduct is well known to great and small.
 The mighty and the wise rejected him,
 But thou didst welcome him when he arrived,
 And take him by the hand as one well born—
 A thing incredible to upright folk,
 And not approved by me. Thou hast forgotten
 Perchance his conduct when thou went'st in fear
 Because of him. He lashed thee many times
 Upon the head—a thing that none commend.¹
 Thou shouldest not make barren thine own fame,
 And barter thy tranquillity to him.
 When they deliver this let thine advice,
 Now dark, consider well if thou wilt profit
 By sending us that slave, his feet in fetters ;
 Else I dispatch an army from Írán,
 And for Túrán turn daylight into gloom."

Now when the letter reached the Khán, and he
 Had heard the intention of Khusrau Parwíz,
 He told the envoy : " When thou com'st to court
 To-morrow morning ask for the reply."

The envoy came in haste ; he had not slept

¹ See p. 144.

All night. He waited till he saw the Torch
 Resplendent of the sun, then made all haste
 To have an audience of the Khán who sent
 For scribe with pen and ink and silk of Chín,
 And wrote in answer : “ To the Maker be
 Such praise as magnates give from me, a slave,”
 Proceeding thus : “ Thy letter I have read,
 And set the messenger before me. Speak
 Thou unto slaves expressions such as thine.
 It fitteth not thine ancient family
 To disallow the greatness of the great,
 Or not to make the lowly know his place.
 Mine are the whole of Chín and of Túrán,
 And the Haitálian crown. I ne'er broke faith ;
 Suggest it not. To break my pledge when I
 Have ta'en Bahrám Chúbína by the hand
 Will make men call me base-born. I fear none
 Save holy God, but as for thee if greatness
 Increase with thee so also should thy wisdom.”

C. 1961

He set his seal thereto and told the envoy :—
 “ Companion with the wind.”

Within a month
 The envoy reached the Sháh who when he read
 The letter writhed and was in fear of fortune.
 He called the Iránians, told the Khán's reply,
 And showed the letter, and the Great, when they
 Had read it, mused. He gat from them this answer :—
 “ O glory of the throne and crown of kings !
 Weigh these things well ; consult some ancient sage ;
 Let not this letter make thee rash ; turn not
 The torch of former Grace to gloom ; select
 Some old Iránian sage, wise, eloquent,
 A warrior and a scribe, and let him go
 Hence to the Khán to speak and hear his views,
 Inform him what Bahrám Chúbína was
 At first and, after, to what ends he used

His leadership, and having ordered all
 Was fain to make a bondslave of his lord.
 If this be not accomplished in one month
 Then let the envoy stay a year forwhy
 'Twill not be easy to disparage him
 Because he is the Khán's own son-in-law.
 The envoy must be very plausible,
 And none must gather what his purpose is."

Thereafter brave Bahrám Chúbína, hearing
 That some one from Írán had brought the Khán
 A letter, went to him forthwith and said :—
 " My gracious lord ! I hear yon recreant knave
 Is plying thee with letters. Choose from Chín
 A gallant host and occupy Írán.
 My scimitar shall conquer it and Rúm ;
 I will salute thee monarch of those lands,
 And there the watchmen of the night shall have
 Thy name upon their lips. I will behead
 Inglorious Khusrau Parwíz, and may
 No top or toe be left him ! I took service
 That I might root out the Sásániens."

C. 1692

The Khán, on hearing, pondered and his heart
 Was like a wood with thoughts. He summoned all
 The elders—eloquent, learned, heedful men—
 Told them Bahrám Chúbína's scheme, revealed
 What had been secretly proposed and gat
 This answer from the men of lore, alike
 From those of his own kin and alien :—
 " 'Tis no light task, but hard, to consummate
 The measure of the lineage of Sásán ;
 Yet if Bahrám Chúbína shall march forth,
 And show the wise the way, he in Írán
 Will find full many a friend since he will have
 The Khán to back and help him, and thy fortune
 Soon will achieve the work. We ought to listen
 To what he saith."

Bahrám Chúbína's heart

Revived when this he heard ; he laughed and changed
 In bearing. All the warriors agreed
 That they must choose two young men who were fit
 To have command, inured to toil and soldiers.
 There was in Chín a noble named Chínwí,
 And one Zhangwí—a chief. The Khán sent, sum-
 moned,
 And made those men of war his paymasters.
 He bade them both : “ Be circumspect in fight,
 And ever look up to Bahrám Chúbína
 Alike in times of joyance and of wrath,
 Secure the fords of the Jíhún and send it
 In dust up to the sky.”

He gave to them

A valiant host—all chiefs and warrior-lions.
 Drums sounded at Bahrám Chúbína's portal,
 And Sol's face changed to ebony with dust.
 From Chín toward Írán he took his way
 Upon Sapandármad at break of day.

§ 36

How Khusrav Parwiz sent Kharrád, Son of Barzín, to the Khán and how he schemed to slay Bahrám Chúbína

Now when the great king heard : “ The wolf hath come
 Outside the wood, and bold Bahrám Chúbína
 Hath brought a host that robbeth heaven of lustre,”—
 He said thus to Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
 “ Go to the Khán upon this business.
 Thou art acquainted best both with Írán
 And with Túrán, and with their divers tongues.”

C. 1963

He oped his treasury and brought forth such jewels,
 Such scimitars and golden belts, as made
 Kharrád astound and secretly invoke
 The name of God. With these he left for Chín,
 Crossed the Jíhún and took unwonted paths,
 Neared the Sháh's palace, looked around and chose
 One to announce : " An envoy from the Sháh
 Hath come to court."

The Khán, on hearing this,
 Prepared his throne and bade admit the envoy
 Who, as he drew anear, made eloquent
 His tongue and did obeisance, saying : " Thy slave
 Will frame his tongue to speak at thy command."

The Khán replied : " A sweet tongue maketh young
 The heart of eld. Speak words of profit ; they
 Are pith when spoken but, unspoken, peel."

Thereat Kharrád recalled old tales and first
 Praised the Creator, who controlleth fortune,
 The Almighty and the Lord of fate, who made
 " Sky, earth, and time, high heaven and the world,
 Who hath all power of right while we are slaves,
 And tell his righteous acts. To one He giveth
 The crown and lofty throne, another one
 He maketh vile, afflicted, and cast down,
 Not that He loveth this and hateth that,
 But why He only knoweth. We, both great
 And small, are born but to return to dust,
 And have perforce resigned to death our bodies.
 Begin we with pre-eminent Jamshíd,
 Or with the glorious world-lord Tahmúras,
 And thus pass on to Kai Kubád and all
 The Great that we remember—Kai Khusrau,
 The famous Rustam and by that same token
 Continue till we reach Asfandiyár.
 Their share of this world was the charnel-house ;
 They have drunk bane instead of antidote.

Our present Sháh is of thy kin ; he joyeth
 And sorroweth as thou dost wax and wane.
 His great-grandsire upon the mother's side,
 When glorious Sháhs held sway, was Khán of Chín.
 Now in these latter days our covenant
 Hath been renewed and everything is changed.
 May He that giveth victory bless thee,
 And be thine earth compact of heads of kings.”

He spake. The Khán gave ear and answered
 him :—

“ O trafficker in lóre ! if in Írán
 Be one like thee he knoweth well the sky ! ”

The Khán assigned him lodging in the palace,
 And seat anear the throne, then bade him bring
 The gifts and give all to the treasurer.

The Khán said : “ Mayst thou lack not worldly wealth. C. 1964
 If thou wilt take a present of me speak
 That I too may accept what thou hast brought,
 But if not thou art brighter than a gift—
 The crown of chiefs in knowledge.”

They prepared
 For him a pleasant dwelling-place and draped it
 With stuff of every kind. At board and chase,
 At feast and drinking-bout this favourite
 Was with the Khán, sought an occasion, found him
 One day at leisure and made bold to say :—

“ Bahrám Chúbína is a miscreant,
 Worse than malicious Áhriaman, and selleth
 Men veteran for what it were not worth
 A mite to mention. King Hurmuzd was first
 To bring him forward, raising him by favour
 Above the sun. Not one knew e'en his name,
 And yet his will hath everywhere prevailed !
 Although he doth thee many a kindly office,
 Yet will he break faith with thee in the end
 As with the Sháhs he did, regarding neither

The Sháh nor God. If to the Sháh thou wilt Dispatch him thou wilt raise up to the moon The Iránian monarch's head. Thenceforth Irán And all Chín are thine own and thou mayst dwell Where'er thou wilt."

The Khán was stunned to hear Such talk, regarded him with louring eyes, And said to him : " Speak not such words as these, For thou wilt blacken our regard for thee. I am no miscreant and treaty-breaker Because the shroud of such must be the dust."

Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing that, Knew that his novelty was out of date,¹ And made reply : " O thou of royal race ! Why dost thou think to speak such words ? The Sháh Is better than Bahrám Chúbína is For thee because of old relationship."

The Khán rejoined : " I will make plain my purpose: If Cæsar broke his covenant by making Agreement with Khusrau Parwíz shall I Do likewise and act treacherously against The brave Bahrám Chúbína ? I possess A thousand slaves such as Khusrau and come Of an illustrious race. The king of Rúm Did not oppress thy Sháh but gave him treasure Land and a host. Since brave Bahrám Chúbína, Whose gests are written in the chronicles, Is my supporter and my son-in-law How can I draw back from my covenant ? "

Again Kharrád was foiled and took to guile. He thought : " The Khán is not concerned for us, Because Bahrám Chúbína hath suggested Irán to him. My words are willow's fruit."

In black despair about the Khán he turned, He had no choice, toward the queen and sought

¹ The remainder of this page in C. should perhaps be omitted.

Among her suite one that could cheer his soul.
 He found a steward and was privy with him,
 Recounted what Khusrau Parwíz had said,
 And made that wretch's heart rejoice, then added :—
 “ Speak for me to the queen that I may be
 Her scribe.”

The crafty steward answered him :—
 “ That will not serve because Bahrám Chúbína
 Is now her son-in-law ; she is his brains
 And skin. Thou art a scribe ; contrive some scheme ;
 Moreover let not thy design get wind.”

Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing this,
 Discerned no top or bottom to his cares.
 There was an agéd Turkman, named Kulún,
 Whom other Turkmans scorned. He dressed in sheep-
 skin,

And lived withal on millet.¹ Makátúra
 Was of his kindred, so he railed against
 Bahrám Chúbína, ever cherishing
 Revenge at heart and cursing him.² Kharrád
 Sent to invite Kulún to his famed mansion,
 Gave him dínárs and drachms, clothes, much to eat,
 Invited him to feasts and seated him
 Among the chiefs. Khárrád, exceeding wise
 And patient-hearted, clever and expert,
 Mused much, consulting on one hand the steward
 About the queen of Chín but held his peace
 When, day or night, he visited the Khán.
 The agéd steward spake thus to Kharrád :—
 “ A man like thee, a noble and a scribe,
 If he had skill and was of fame in leechcraft,
 Would be a crown upon my lady's head,
 And all the more so as her daughter aileth.”

Kharrád replied : “ I have that knowledge too,

¹ On millet bread—a sign of poverty. Cf. p. 337.
² Two couplets omitted.

And, as thou say'st, will take the case in hand."

The steward hastened to the queen and said :—
" A learned leech hath arrived."

C. 1966

" Live and enjoy,"

She answered. " Scratch not thou thy head but
bring him."

He went and told Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
" Preserve thy secret, go announce thyself,
And act the cheerful leech."

That schemer went

Before the queen and found the patient's liver
Disordered. He prescribed pomegranate-juice,
And therewithal a herb that flourisheth
Beside a stream ; folk call it chicory.
He sought to stay the aching of her head.
Within a week, for God so ordered it,
The girl grew like the world-enlightening moon.
The queen brought from her treasury dínárs,
A purseful, and five gold-embroidered robes,
And said : " Take this unworthy recompense,
And ask what more thou wilt."

He said : " Keep these,
And I will ask my guerdon when I please."¹

§ 37

*How Bahrám Chúbína was slain by Kulún as Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, had planned*

Bahrám Chúbína, for his part, arrayed
His army like a pheasant's wing and marched
To Marv. Then one came to the Khán to say :—
" Let none pass to Írán from Turkistán

¹ There is no break here in the original.

Or Chín to tell Khusrau Parwíz about us,
And make a gift to him of our designs."

The Khán proclaimed : " If one go to Írán
Without our seal him will I cleave asunder,
And money shall not buy him off, by God ! "

Kharrád, son of Barzín, abode two months,
Intent on his close schemes. Then in concern
He called Kulún, gave him the seat of honour
One day and said to him : " None is exempt
From secret sorrow in this world. Thou oft
Hast begged for millet, barley-bread, and sheepskins
From all in Chín, but now thy food is bread
And lamb, and thou art richly clad withal.
Contrast thy present with thy past estate,
Past malisons with present benisons.

Thine years have reached a hundred or at least
Are great in sum. I have a dread emprise
For thee whereby thou mayest gain a throne,
Or darksome dust. I will obtain for thee
An impress from the signet of the Khán ;
Then speed as though thou wouldest roll up the earth.
Thou must get access to Bahrám Chúbína,
And bide thy time at Marv. Don thy black sheep-
skin,

Provide a knife, and go. Note heedfully
The twentieth¹ of the month and on that day
Approach this man world-famous for he holdeth
That day ill-omened as I have observed
For many a year. He will admit not then
The public and wear but brocade of Rúm.
Say : ' From the daughter of the Khán I bring
The mighty chief a message.' Keep thy knife
Unsheathed within thy sleeve till he shall bid thee
Approach alone and as thou dost say thus :—
' The noble lady said : " When thou dost tell

C. 1967

¹ " The day Bahrám " in the original.

The secret in his ear hide it from others.”’
 When he shall say : ‘ What is the secret ? Tell me,’
 Approach him quickly, slit his navel, rise,
 And seek to flee. All those that hear his cry
 Will hurry from the chieftain to the stalls ;
 This one will go for steeds and that for treasure,
 And thou wilt suffer not for slaying him.
 If they slay thee . . . well thou hast seen the world,
 And hast approved its weal and woe. Besides
 Thou wilt have had revenge and done what use
 Enjoineth,¹ but indeed none will concern
 Himself about thee at that time to harm thee,
 While if thou scapest slaying thou hast bought
 The world and paid for it, the conquering Sháh
 Will give to thee a city and withal
 A share in this world.”²

To that sage Kulún
 Made answer : “ Need I any further guide ?
 Good sooth ! although I am a hundred I
 Fain would get somewhat so I have no choice.
 Be both my body and my soul thy ransom,
 Such is the covenant I make with thee.”

Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing that,
 Sped to the queen and said : “ The time hath come
 For me to ask my boon, O gracious lady !
 And I will tell it. Certain of my folk
 Across the river are in bonds. Be pleased
 To set mine own feet free. Procure for me
 An impress of the Khán’s seal and this know
 That by so doing thou wilt give me life.”

She said : “ He is asleep and drunk : I might
 Put clay upon the signet on his hand.”

She asked Kharrád, son of Barzín, for seal-clay,
 Went to that drunken sleeper’s couch forthwith
 From her apartments, presently impressed

¹ Cf. p. 335.

² In C. the new section begins here.

The clay upon the signet, came, and gave it
 To her petitioner. That scribe gave thanks
 Therefor, then went and passed it to the elder.
 Kulún received that seal, sped pheasant-like,¹
 And came to Marv, unmarked. He tarried there
 Until the twentieth of the month—the day
 That was unlucky for Bahrám Chúbína,²
 Who was at home attended by one slave,
 With apples, quinces, and pomegranates placed
 Before him. All alone Kulún approached
 The gate and said thus to the porter : “ Sir !
 I bring word from the daughter of the Khán,
 And I am neither warrior nor Persian.
 That pious lady hath entrusted me
 With secrets, which for her sake must be kept,
 For this great monarch. She is ailing too,
 And is with child. Tell him that I may give
 My message to the crowned and famous chief.”

The noble chamberlain made haste, went in,
 Came to the entrance of the warrior’s chamber,
 And said : “ A scurvy-looking messenger,
 Clad in a sheep-skin, hath arrived and saith :—
 ‘ I carry from the daughter of the Khán
 A message to thy potent lord.’ ”

Replied

Bahrám Chúbína : “ Say to him : ‘ Display
 Thy visage also at the chamber-door.’ ”

Kulún drew near and from the doorway showed
 His head. On seeing an old man weak and wretched
 Bahrám Chúbína said to him : “ If thou
 Hast letters give them up.”

Kulún rejoined :—

“ I have a message only and will speak not
 With others by.”

Bahrám Chúbína said :—

¹ Cf. Vol. vii. p. 88 note. ² Cf. p. 337.

“ Approach without more mystery and tell it
Within mine ear.”

Kulún drew near. The knife
Was up his sleeve. His villainy grew plain.
He feigned to whisper and then struck. A cry
Rose from the room. Now when Bahrám Chúbína
Called out the people ran to him. He said :—
“ Arrest the fellow. Ask who prompted him.”

Then all within the palace came and dragged
That hoary-headed man off by the feet,
The servants in their fury smiting him
With palms and fists. He took the buffettings,
And opened not his lips from noon till midnight,
Then when he had been broken, hand and foot,
They flung him down within the palace-court,
And gathered in their sorrow and dismay
About Bahrám Chúbína. He still bled,
And groaned. His cheeks were lapis-lazuli.
His sister too had come to him forthwith.
She tore her hair, laid on her lap his head,
Then wailed and cried right bitterly : “ Brave horse-
man !

The lion used to flee the woods before thee !
Who hath removed this Column of the world ?
Who hath o'erthrown this mighty Elephant ?
Woe for the cavalier of chieftain-mould,
World-conqueror, undaunted, lion-queller !
Thou didst not serve the Sháh, and no God-server
Was he that smote thine elephantine form.
Alas ! who tore this tall, exalted Mountain
Out of the pleasant waters by the roots ?
Who hath plucked up so flourishing a Cypress ?
Who cast this crown of greatness basely down ?
Who filled the ocean suddenly with dust ?
Who hurled this moving Mountain to the abyss ?
Now alien, friendless, helpless, and alone

We live despised in other men's domains.
 I said to him : ' O captain of the host !
 Uproot thou not the sprout of loyalty,
 For if a daughter only had been left
 Sprung from Sásán she would assume the crown,
 The whole face of the land would be her slave,
 Her blest crown touch the sky.' Thou wouldest not
 hear

My profitable words but now repentest
 Thy deeds and bear'st a guilty soul to God.
 Ill is on our great house ; we are the sheep ;
 Our foemen are like wolves."

The wounded man,

On hearing what she said and seeing all
 Her heart and prudent counsellings, her cheeks
 Rent by her nails, her hair plucked out, her heart
 And eyes all blood, her face all dust, though faint
 And suffering loosed his tongue and answered thus :—
 " My noble sister ! nothing ever matched
 Thy counsel yet the measure of my days
 Is full. I acted not on thine advice ;
 A dív-like guide led me in everything.
 No prince was more exalted than Jamshíd,
 Through whom the world was full of fear and hope,
 Yet erred he at the bidding of the dívs
 So that he made the world black for himself.
 'Twas just the same with watchful Kai Káús,
 Heaven's favourite whose steps were fortunate.
 The loathly Dív's incitements ruined him ;
 The evils that befel him thou hast heard :
 He mounted heavenward to look upon
 The circling sky and course of sun and moon,
 But fell into the deep beyond Sarí,
 Headforemost.¹ In like manner hath the Dív
 Caused me to err and docked my hand from good.

¹ Cf. Vol. ii. p. 102 seq.

C. 1970

‘Thine is the royal diadem,’ he said,
 ‘From Aries to Pisces all is thine.’
 I do repent mine evil deeds. God’s pardon
 Were gracious to me. Thus was destiny
 Writ o’er my head; why should I mourn the past?
 The water riseth o’er me; grief and joy
 Are both as wind to me: ’twas written thus;
 What was to be hath been; none can abate,
 Or greater ills. Thy counsels are mine heirlooms,
 Thy sayings are mine earrings. Right and wrong
 Are over; call not fruitless words to mind,
 But turn to God and place your confidence
 Where fortune smileth. He is friend enough
 In troubles; tell none of your grief and joy.
 My destined portion of the world is mine,
 The end is come and now I must depart.”

Then to Yalán-sína he said: “I leave
 The whole host, throne, the kingship and the state,
 To thee. Do thou take heed of my good sister:
 Thou wilt not need another counsellor.
 Part not asunder. May disunion
 Ne’er come between you twain. Abide not long
 Within this hostile territory. I
 Came hither and am weary of the place.
 Go and present you to Khusrau Parwíz,
 Speak and hear him.¹ If he shall pardon you
 Hail not another as your sun and moon.
 Take many greetings from me to Gurdví,
 And tell him what hath chanced.² Make me my
 charnel
 Within Írán, and wreck my palace here.
 Much trouble have I suffered through the Khán,
 And have not found him gracious for one day.
 It was no guerdon for my toils to have
 A dív dispatched to slay me, yet in truth,

¹ Couplet omitted.

² Two couplets omitted.

If he shall hear of this, he will not know
 What he should think. None save Írániāns
 Conceived this plan, and had the Dív for guide."

He called a scribe and wrote, as there was need,
 This letter to the Khán : " Bahrám Chúbína
 Hath passed away in failure, shame, and woe.
 Be good to those I leave and keep them safe
 From toil and trouble caused by enemies,
 For I have never wronged thee but ensued
 Whate'er was wise and right."

He gave his sister
 Much good advice, embraced her darling head,
 And laid his mouth against her ear, his eyes
 Suffused with blood, and he gave up the ghost.
 All wept him bitterly and lived in sorrow.
 His sister in her pain bewailed him sorely,
 And kept recalling all her brother's words :
 Her heart was riven by her grief for him.
 She had a narrow silver coffin made,
 She wrapped brocade around that warrior-form,
 With raiment of fine linen neath his vest,
 And covered him with camphor, face and all.

C. 1971

The process of this Wayside Inn is so !
 Toil not, thou knowest that thou needs must go.
 Quaff not thou grief but wine by day and night
 With lips all laughter and with heart-delight.

§ 38

*How the Khán had Tidings of Bahrám Chúbína's Death
 and how he destroyed the House and Family of
 Kulún*

When tidings came about Bahrám Chúbína,
 And what his gory had entailed on him,

And when his letter too arrived, and when
 The messenger had told his tale, the Khán
 Was grieved at heart, his eyes were filled with
 blood,
 His cheeks became like lapis-lazuli.
 Amazed he called his veteran counsellors,
 And told the fate of brave Bahrám Chúbína
 While every one that heard it wept for woe.
 All Chín bewailed right bitterly and burned,
 Without a fire, for anguish. Then the Khán
 Investigated all to ascertain
 The author of the crime and, when he found
 That 'twas Kharrád who planned that wicked
 deed,
 Exclaimed : " How did that dog escape when he
 Had turned such fire as this on us ? "

Kulún

Had two sons living in Túrán as well
 As divers friends and kinsmen. When the Khán
 Had learned the truth he burned Kulún's house
 down,
 And all about it, flinging on the flames
 His sons and giving all their goods to spoil.
 Then when the queen's turn came he had her
 haled
 Forth from the curtains by her hair, seized all
 Her goods, and heeded not her misery.
 He sent swift dromedaries everywhere :
 Kharrád, son of Barzín, came not to hand.
 The Khán grieved long, arraying all his slaves
 Throughout the land of Chín in mourning weeds,
 For he had loved Bahrám Chúbína's deeds.

§ 39

*How Khusrau Parwíz had Tidings of the Slaying of
Bahrám Chúbína and honoured Kharrád, Son of
Barzín*

Now when Kharrád, son of Barzín, approached
Khusrau Parwíz and told what he had done,
And seen and heard, the Sháh's heart joyed for he
Was quit of that opponent worshipful.

He showered many drachms, robes, and much else
Upon the poor. They wrote to every king
And chief a letter in the ancient tongue
To tell what God almighty, the All-just,
Had brought to pass and how He had sent up
Dust from that foe. The Sháh too wrote a letter
In royal wise to Cæsar. For a se'nnight
They held festivities and called for harp
And wine in every quarter of the city.

The Sháh sent offerings to the fanes of Fire,
And robes of honour to the Great. He told
Kharrád, son of Barzín : "Thou hast deserved
To have the crown and throne," and filled his mouth
With royal gems ; the treasurer poured dínárs,
Some hundred thousand, out before his feet
On such wise that they grew as high as he.
The Sháh said : "Whoso turneth from the way¹
Shall have his day bedimmed although he be
In battle like the brave Bahrám Chúbína
From whom an ancient Turk hath raised the dust."

The chiefs all blessed Khusrau Parwíz and said :—
"Without thee never be the crown and signet,
And if, in spite of all thy loving-kindness,
A man would have thy face lack radiancy
Then let him as Bahrám Chúbína be."

C. 1972

¹ Reading with P.

§ 40

*How the Khán sent his Brother to Gurdyá, the Sister of
Bahrám Chúbína, with a Letter touching her
Brother's Death and asking her in Marriage as
his Queen, and her Answer*

Now when the Khán's heart was relieved and Chín
Was all like clay with gore he said one day :—

“ Weak men, weak deeds ! but I was well content
And gladdened through Bahrám Chúbína's prowess.

Now why have I allowed the hero's kin
To bide in so much weakness and contempt ?

C. 1973 I shall be blamed by all that hear thereof,
And in the future none will trust mine oath.

I have not soothed his little son's distress
Or have concerned me for his kin although
He was related to me through my daughter,
And heart and soul compact of love and wisdom.”

He bade his brother come and spake at large :—

“ E'en as a pheasant flieth in a garden
Betake thyself to Marv, look on the kin
Of brave Bahrám Chúbína, greet them well,
And say : ‘ By God and by the throne of greatness
I had no knowledge of this villainy.

I too am stricken to the heart and wrapped
In grief while I shall live, and in revenge
Have bathed the surface of the land in gore.
The cities curse, but bless Bahrám Chúbína.
Although I should take vengeance for this hurt,
And bring the heaven down, one in a hundred
Would not avenge so famed a hero's blood ;
But no one, as all wise men know, can 'scape
From God's decree. This was assigned to him,
And all through the perverse Dív's sorcery.
I hold to my first pledge and will keep faith.’

Convey a separate letter to Gurdyá :—
 ‘ O holy lady of unsullied skirt !
 Thou art all uprightness and kindness,
 Of lofty nature, far from all defect.
 Long have I mused upon thy state, while wisdom
 Hath been in secret session with my heart,
 And have found no lord fitter than myself
 For thee, so grace my curtains by thy counsel ;
 Thee will I hold as mine own soul and body,
 And do mine utmost to keep faith with thee.
 Then all in this state shall be thine to bid,
 And I will pledge my heart to do thy will.
 Now gather all thy friends, discuss the matter
 Before the wise and see what seemeth best
 To thy bright mind when thou hast wisely weighed.
 Let wisdom rule thy words and then inform me.’ ”

That atheling, his brother, heard and like
 A turtle-dove from cypress sped to Marv,
 And to Bahrám Chúbina’s kindred bare
 The letter and good will, told what the Khán
 Had said and how he passioned to avenge
 The slain, then added : “ Sages and archmages
 Approven well and vigilant of heart !
 Herein may much good tidings come to you,
 And may the almighty Judge befriend the dead.
 This sudden death—no trifle—was a thing
 That none expected.”

C. 1974

Then he gave the sister,
 But privily, the letter and the message
 Sent by the Khán. He spake of their connexion,
 Her counsel and fair words, of past and present,
 And of the purity and piety
 Of women that both counsel and console.
 The young man spake, the lady of the skirt
 Unsullied heard him but made choice of silence.
 Thereafter, when she had perused the letter,

And all the words of the imperious Khán,
 She made her wisdom and her knowledge mates,
 Thought out her answer and informed the brother :—
 I have perused this letter and held session
 With wisdom. Just what kings, experienced folk,
 And potentates would do the Khán hath done.
 Oh ! may our eyes be bright upon the man
 That seeketh thus to avenge us ! May the world
 Ne'er lack the Khán, and may the crown of greatness
 Rejoice in him. May care ne'er wound his heart,
 And may he ne'er despair. We sat in counsel.
 I read thy letter over, every whit,
 And all the men of wisdom and of might
 Agree to entertain this wish of thine.
 Howbeit all my family are now
 In sorrow and the subject is ill-timed.
 When mourning for so great a chief is over
 The Khán's commandment shall not be transgressed.
 I purpose not to go back to Irán.
 Naught can be better for a virtuous dame
 Than to be married, but if I shall come
 In haste what will the wise king say of me ?
 If in the midst of grief I aim at joy
 I shall not act with virtue or respect ;
 The wise will say that I lack modesty,
 The Khán himself will think me indiscreet.
 When four months of this mourning have elapsed
 I will dispatch a horseman to the king.
 Meanwhile hear will I what I ought to hear—
 All that my counsellors may have to urge—
 And state it in a letter to the king
 When mine adviser goeth unto him.
 As for the present, fare rejoicing hence,
 And tell the Khán the message that I send.”

She gave the envoy many gifts, and he,
 A man experienced, left Marv joyfully.

§ 41

How Gurdyá consulted her Nobles and fled from Marv

Then at her leisure that young, prudent dame

C. 1975

Consulted with her counsellors and said :—

“ A new thing, one that ne’er will stale with me,
Hath chanced : the Khán, that ruler of the world,
In flattering terms hath asked for me in marriage.
He hath no fault ; he is a king, great, brave,
And master of the armies of Túrán.

None dared to name me while my Lion lived.

For twelve years after I had lost my sire

The brave Bahrám Chúbína took in charge

Mine orphanhood and raged when any one
Demanded me in marriage. Now the Khán

Is not a person of small consequence,
And he hath both ability and power.

Howbeit when he striveth to make kinship
Between the Turks and the Íránians

From that bond and connexion time will see
Both travail and affliction in the end.

Look what it was that Siyáwush received
Except sun-burning from Afrásiyáb !

That youth unmatched by other mother’s son
Gave from the first his head up to the wind.

What did that chieftain’s son too do but send
The dust up from Írán and from Túrán ?

Contrive that unknown to the Turks we may
Convey this story to Írán forthwith.

I have dispatched a letter to Gurdwí,

For I had apprehensions on this score,

That he might ope my matter to the Sháh,

And tell my toil and care. God helping me,
He will both hear and grant my fair appeal.”

They said : "Thou art for life our youthful lady
 In Chín and in Írán. An iron mountain
 Could not displace thee, and thou guidest heroes
 To manliness. Thou art more shrewd than sages,
 More full of counsel than wise ministers.
 We are thy subjects all ; 'tis thine to bid,
 And thine to judge and deal with this request."

On hearing this she called the muster-roll,
 And opened offices to pay the troops,
 Went forth, inspected every one of them,
 And chose eleven hundred and three score,
 Each one of whom would face ten cavaliers
 In fight. She furnished drachms and then returning
 To her abode harangued her warlike powers :—

C. 1976

"He that hath ever seen a stirrup-strap
 Is not perturbed because of ups and downs.
 He feareth not a murderous multitude
 E'en if the clouds shall shower heads on him ;
 He will not turn from me when I retreat ;
 He will not be afraid when foemen charge.
 Fare we toward Írán, fare we toward
 The monarch of the brave. Here in Túrán
 We are but strangers, destitute and friendless,
 Weak as we are and abject mid the great.
 Withdraw we then when darkness hath set in,
 And when our foemen's heads are dull with sleep.
 Let not your hearts be straitened on the way
 If any troops of Chín encounter us,
 Because the chieftains with their massive maces
 Will follow us past doubt, but let us each
 Take his own life in hand and, if they come,
 Give and get blows withal ; but all of you
 That disapprove of this ! abide ye here."

They shouted : "We are lieges and obey."
 This understood, they rose and made them ready
 For war with Chín. Izid Gashasp, the chief,

And Yalán-sína mounted with the troops,
Who all said : “ Better perish with renown
Than live and let the men of Chín prevail.”

She crossed the desert to the caravans ;
She had the camels passed in front of her,
And chose three thousand to transport her baggage.
At night like some illustrious cavalier
She mounted, mace in hand ; her charger’s mail
Was splendid, and she wore a breastplate, sword,
And battle-helm, then led both night and day,
Swift as the wind, her host upon its way.

§ 42

*How the Khán received Tidings of the Flight of Gurdya
and how he sent Tuwurg¹ with an Army after her,
and how Gurdya slew Tuwurg*

A number of deserters from her force
Arrived to seek protection from the Khán.
His brother came and said : “ O famous chief,
And lover of the fray ! some valiant troops
Have made toward Írán, and many others
Have sought for my protection. Realm and host
Will laugh for ever at thy court’s disgrace.”

The chieftain’s cheek, when he had heard the words,
Grew white with anger, and he answered : “ Haste, C. 1977
And lead an army forth. Observe what road
Those troops have taken. When thou reachest them
Act not injuriously but first of all
Make use of honied words, for of them none
Hath any knowledge of our usages ;
Their fear perchance hath turned us into foes.
Speak with all unction and entreat them well ;

¹ Reading with P.

Encourage them by loving-kindliness ;
 But if they offer armed resistance play
 The man and let there by no dallying ;
 Make one tomb for the whole of them at Marv
 So that the earth may be like pheasant's plumes."

He went forth with six thousand valiant horsemen,
 Picked Turks, and on the fourth day overtook
 The Iránians, but that lion-hearted dame
 Was not concerned beholding them. She left
 The army, visited as swift as wind
 The cameleers, disposed the baggage-train
 Behind the lines, and then surveyed the field.
 She donned her brother's armour and bestrode
 A fiery steed. The hosts were ranked. Each man
 Took his own life in hand. Tuwurg came forth
 Before his troops (the Khán was wont to call him
 "Old Wolf") and said to the Iránians :—
 " Is not the virtuous dame in this great host ? "
 For Gurdyá was arrayed in heavy mail,
 And had her waist girt like a warrior's,
 So that the valiant billman knew her not,
 But spurring on his steed and coming near
 Said to her : " Midst this army where shall I
 Seek for the sister of the murdered Sháh,
 For I have many things to say to her,
 Respecting both the present and the past ? "

She answered : " Here am I prepared to charge
 A ravening lion."

When he heard the voice
 Of her that rode a lusty lion-steed
 He was amazed and said : " The Khán of Chín
 Of all the kingdom made a choice of thee
 To keep him mindful of Bahrám Chúbína,
 The Lion and the chosen cavalier.
 He said : ' I will requite the favour done
 If only thou wilt listen to my words.'

He said to me : ‘ Haste unto her and say :—
 ‘ If what I spake was not acceptable
 Know that my words were not imperative,
 And that I have renounced what I proposed.
 If is not well for thee to quit our coasts :
 Attempt it not although thou wilt not wed.’
 Join words together unto this effect,
 And if she will not take advice use bonds
 For her and all that have supported her.
 This is too much ! ’ ”¹

She answered : “ Let us quit C. 1978
 The field and troops, and I will answer thee
 Advisedly on all points.”

He approached
 That famed and valiant dame who, seeing him
 Alone, displayed to him her face beneath
 Her sable casque, and said : “ Thou hast beheld
 “ Bahrám Chúbína’s horsemanship and courage
 With admiration : his full sister I.
 His day is done so I now will essay thee.
 I long to fight with thee. If thou shalt find
 That I am worthy of a husband say so.
 Good sooth ! thou mayst approve me as thy spouse ! ”

She spake, then spurred her steed. Ízid Gashasp
 Rode close behind her. With her spear she struck
 The girdle of Tuwurg and pierced his mail.
 He tumbled headlong, and the sand beneath
 Ran blood. With chosen warriors Yalán-sína
 Charged and discomfited the host of Chín,
 Slew, overthrew, and wounded many a man,
 Pursued the foe two leagues and left few mounted.
 The whole plain was a-stream with blood that day,
 This man was headless, that head-downward lay.

¹ “ Arrange les affaırs de cette mani ère, et si un conseil *du Khakan*
 ne te suffit pas, fais un traité. Quiconque croit le Khakan capable
 de faire ce que *tu crains*, dépasse ce qu'il est permis de dire.” Mohl.

§ 43

How Gurdya wrote to Gurdwi

Victorious she drew toward Írán,
 She drew toward the monarch of the brave,
 But halted for a short time at Ámwí
 With questionings increasing in her heart.
 She wrote thence to her brother, telling him
 In sorrow all that occurred, and said :—
 “ What time the brave Bahrám Chúbína died,
 All care and grief fraternal, to us both
 He proffered much good counsel. May we never
 Distress his spirit ! Furthermore he said :—
 ‘ Inform the exalted monarch of the counsels
 That thou hast heard from me.’ A mighty host,
 All men of name and warriors, pursued us,
 But I have so entreated them in fight
 That never more will they see fight or feast.
 With me are many famous chiefs, and harm
 Must not be theirs. Till my good star convey
 A hoped response I pause upon the way.”

§ 44

How Khusráu Parwíz slew Bandwi

C. 1979

From that time forth the Sháh sat undisturbed,
 Since brave Bahrám Chúbína was no more,
 And found no chieftain hostile and disposed
 To counter him in fight. One day he thus
 Addressed his upright minister : “ How long
 Shall I conceal my thoughts ? Shall my sire’s slayer
 For ever be about me as a kinsman ?

Now that I have the power and feel aggrieved
What should result ? ”

They spread the board and quaffed,
And put Bandwí in fetters that same day.
The Sháh thereafter bade his minister :—
‘ Cut off his hands and feet ; he will not then
Gird up his loins to shed the blood of kings.’ ”

They lopped him and he died forthwith, resigning
His blood-stained life up to Khusrau Parwíz.
The Sháh then sent a man to Khurásán
With strict injunctions : “ Hold thy tongue and go
Hence to the marchlord’s court. Bid Gustaham :—
‘ When thou hast read my letter come forthwith.’ ”

The envoy reached in Khurásán the court
Of one at ease and gave the Sháh’s behest,
That youthful Sháh who poured out blood with zest.

§ 45

*How Gustaham rebelled against Khusrau Parwíz and
took Gurdya to Wife*

When Gustaham heard this he summoned all
His scattered troops, set forth upon the march,
And passing by Sarí and by Ámul
Came to Gurgán—the country of the Great—
Heard that the Sháh had grown severe and slain
Bandwí, his brother, unexpectedly,
Whereat he gnawed his hands, gat from his steed,
Rent all his raiment as a paladin,
And wailing poured the dust upon his head,
Perceiving that the world-lord would avenge
Hurmuzd on him. He turned back sorrowing,
And, thou hadst said : “ Companioning the wind.”

Collecting all his scattered troops he marched
Toward the forest of Nárwan and, when
He reached the mountains of Ámul, drew up
His army in that forest, thence made raids,
And thus began a system of revenge.

C. 1980 He found a living for all workless men,
And where he heard that royal troops were camped
Descended on them and destroyed them all.

Now when Gurdwí arrived he told the Sháh
All that his sister with her warriors
Had done against the marchlords of the Khán,
And how she made their dust go up at Marv,
While Gustaham, on his side, was informed
That brave Bahrám Chúbína's days were done,
And that Gurdya with many troops had fled
That fierce chief,¹ that a host had followed her
To take revenge, and how she had entreated
Those famous men of Chín. He called to horse,
And from that forest led his troops like wind
To meet her. When Gurdya was ware she went
Forth with her chiefs and nobles. Gustaham,
On seeing them, rode out before his troops.
He met Gurdya and was o'ercome by pain
And much remorse about Bahrám Chúbína,
Spake also of his sorrow for Bandwí,
And wiped blood from his eyelids with his sleeve.
He lighted weeping from his steed at sight
Of Yalán-sína and Ízid Gashasp,²
And said : “ The Sháh hath slain Bandwí ; his day
Is over and thou wouldest have said : ‘ The Sháh
Was not his sister's son. Bandwí bled not
For him who used to pour his very soul
Out at Bandwí's feet and lamented him
When absent ! ’ Now upon the earliest chance
The Sháh, true to the instincts of his race,

¹ The Khán.

² Reading with P.

Hath severed from Bandwí both hands and feet !
 So now what hope can ye have in the Sháh,
 For never came fruit from the willow's bough ?
 He will entreat your kindred even worse,
 And make meat in the city cheap enough.
 E'en at a distance he will rage to see,
 And plan new vengeance on, Yalán-sína,
 Thou being Bahrám Chúbína's general,
 And having power through him. Let each that
 knoweth
 The Sháh be ware or better cut his throat !
 If ye will stay with us we will consult
 On all things great and small."

The hearers took

His counsel ; they all shunned destruction's path.
 He spake in earnest to Gurdya, recounting
 Bahrám Chúbína's acts. She was o'ercome
 By what he said, and felt that he was right.
 All joined him and his clouded counsels cleared.
 " Doth not," thus said he to Yalán-sína,
 " This lady talk of marriage and desire
 Its honours ? "

He replied : " Wait till I speak,
 And by long converse ascertain her will."

He said to her : " O lady ! I have seen thee
 Act as adviser. Thou didst well to flee
 The Khán, preferring wisely thine own race.
 What sayest thou to the Sháh's maternal uncle,
 The valiant and the wealthy Gustaham,
 The captain and the leader of a host ? "

She said : " A spouse that cometh from Írán
 Ne'er will despoil my kindred."

So Yalán-sína

Gave her to Gustaham—a gallant hero
 Of royal lineage—who tended her
 Like a fresh apple, for he saw in this

C. 1981

His exaltation nothing of a fall.
 The armies sent forth by Khusrau Parwíz
 Found their old fortune altogether changed,
 And Gustaham, on seeing a host o'erthrown,
 Would spare the troops and take them for his own.

§ 46

How Khusrau Parwíz took Counsel with Gurdwí concerning Gustaham and how Gurdya, prompted by Gurdwí, slew him

Time passed ; the Sháh's soul grieved at Gustaham.
 One day he said in anger to Gurdwí :—
 “ So Gustaham hath got Gurdya to wife,
 And those great companies resort, methinketh,
 To him by her advice. A spy of mine
 Hath come back from Ámul and all is clear.”

He spake thus till it darkened, and the eyes
 Of warriors failed, then while the slaves brought lights
 And wine they sent all strangers from the hall,
 And holding conclave with Gurdwí the Sháh
 Discussed affairs and said : “ I have dispatched
 Great forces to Ámul to take revenge,
 And all have come back wounded and in bonds,¹
 Have come back full of sorrow and dismay.
 There is one plan—a trifle when compared
 With crown and throne. Although Bahrám Chúbína
 Erred yet Gurdya was ever on our side,
 And I have got a scheme, but keep it close.
 A letter must be written to Gurdya,
 Like wine-streams in the garth of Paradise,
 To say : ‘ Thou hast been friendly and hast helped me

¹ *i.e.* in a state of disability.

In all things everywhere. Much time hath passed
 While my heart's secret was not on my tongue,
 But now the time for speaking hath arrived
 Because Gurdwí is as myself to me.¹
 Look out for some expedient to abate
 This foul affliction and put Gustaham
 Beneath the stones ; then both my heart and home
 Are thine. This done, thy troops and partizans
 Shall find protection with me everywhere,
 Be nowhere treated with contempt, and I
 Will give a province unto whom thou wilt
 That they may act as rulers, and do thou
 Come to the golden palace of my wives,
 And thou shalt put an end to my revenge.
 Thus will I pledge myself with many oaths,
 And add to these yet more assurances.' "

C. 1982

Gurdwí replied : " May the king live for ever,
 And be as Venus in the Sign of Virgo.
 Thou know'st that I regard my children's lives,
 My fruitful lands and all my family,
 However precious I account them all,
 As worthless when contrasted with thy head.
 I will send one to her on this affair
 To give her light thereon. I shall require
 A letter, written by the Sháh and sealed
 With his own signet, like a shining moon.
 This will I send my sister by my wife,
 And thus put off all our antagonists,
 For this is woman's work and specially
 For one that is discreet. In mine opinion
 Thy words should reach my sister, and the matter
 Soon end as thou wouldest wish. The plan is perfect."

Khusrau Parwíz, on hearing this, rejoiced,
 And thought his cares wind, asked his treasurer

¹ i.e. " I may speak now that thy brother is mine own dearest friend and so there is safe communication."

For paper, chose words redolent of musk,
 And wrote a letter like a garden full
 Of roses like the cheeks of the beloved,
 Replete with pledges, oaths, and promises,
 And manifold advice and flattery.
 Whenas the ink of the inscription dried
 They sealed the letter with a seal of musk.
 Gurdwí wrote counsel too, and much besides,
 Reciting first Bahrám Chúbína's deeds
 Disgracing all his family and land,
 And adding : " God forgive him ! May his wrangling
 Cause no remorse in him ! Those void of wisdom
 Heed not the consequences of their acts.
 Well, he hath gone and we shall follow him,
 Confiding in the justice of our God.
 My wife, on coming, will enlighten thee.
 C. 1983 Swerve not from what she saith or thou wilt make
 Thy fortune's visage wan."

He put the letter

Writ by the Sháh inside his own and wrapped
 Them both in painted silk. The wary wife
 Took them and heard those peremptory words.
 She hasted for the forest of Narwán—
 A woman sent as envoy to a woman.
 Thereat Gurdya became like jocund Spring
 With cheeks all grace and colour and perfume.
 They talked at large about Bahrám Chúbína,
 And wept. Then privily Gurdwí's wife gave
 Gurdya the letter and made plain the path.
 That lion-woman saw the Sháh's dispatch
 And, thou hadst said, looked down upon the moon.
 She laughed and said : " None with five friends would
 think
 This matter difficult."

She called her five,
 And stationed them by Gustaham's bed-chamber.

She read to them the letter of the Sháh,
 But kept it from the chiefs in general.
 When she had said her say she quickly made
 A compact with them and shook hands thereon.
 At night she put the lights out and at once
 Pressed with her hands upon her husband's mouth ;
 Some of the five too came to give her aid,
 Came to the couch of that illustrious one.
 She struggled greatly with the drunken man,
 And silenced him at last. The general
 Died in the darkness and bequeathed both night
 And shining day to others. There arose
 Within the city shouts and cries for help,
 In every quarter tempest rose and fire,
 And when the dauntless lady heard the din
 She clothed her in a Rúman coat of mail.
 That night she called the Iránians, spake at large
 About the murdered man, showed the Sháh's letter,
 And so emboldened them. They blessed the event,
 And showered jewels on the document.

§ 47

*How Gurdyá wrote to Khusráu Parwíz and how he
 summoned and married her*

That dauntless lady called for pen and inkstand,
 And sat at ease among her counsellors.
 She wrote a letter to the Sháh concerning
 His friends and foes, first praised those that eschew
 Revenge, then said : "The bidding of the Sháh
 Hath been obeyed as loyal hearts would wish,
 And through the fortune of the valiant world-lord
 That great host hath dispersed. What further orders

C. 1984

Hast thou to give ? What further wilt thou hang
On thy slave's earring ? ”

When the letter reached

Khusrau Parwíz he joyed in her the more.
The mighty Lion sought a messenger,
High-starred, an honest man and shrewd of soul,
And wrote a letter like the Artang of Chín,¹
With many blessings in it, summoning
The noble lady to the court, and in it
Called her the Diadem upon the moon.

The envoy came dust-swift to her and told
All that the Sháh had said. The lion-lady
Became like radiant roses in the Spring-tide
By reason of that letter, called and paid
Her troops, and loaded up when it was day.
As she approached the city of the Sháh
An army met her ; when she reached the court
The Sháh received her, and she found him kind.
Thereafter she produced great offerings,
As did the chieftains in her company,
Exhibited the goods and all the wealth,
Then gave them to the royal treasurer—
Dínárs and kingly jewels past compute,
Gold-woven brocade, crowns, girdles, golden thrones,
And golden shields. Khusrau-Parwíz beheld
That noble Cypress-tree with cheeks like Spring,
And pheasant's gait, with countenance like day,
And locks like night, while pearls, thou wouldest have
said,
Rained from her lips. He sent her to his bower,
Gave her precedence there, sent to her brother—
His own resourceful minister—to ask her
In marriage, took and held her dear as life,
While robes of honour, coin, and much beside
He showered upon the comrades of his bride.

¹ Arzhang in the original. See Vol. ii. p. 19 *note*.

§ 48

How Gurdyá showed her Accomplishment before Khusrau Parwíz

Two se'nnights passed away. "By sun and moon,
By throne and casque," he said to her, "narrate
Thy battle with the soldiers of the Khán,
And gird thy loins as thou wast girded then."

"O Sháh!" she thus made answer, "live for ever,
And be souls nourished by the sight of thee.
Command thy men to bring a charger here,
A saddle and choice lasso and a bow,
A spear and helmet and a warrior's mail,
Besides a quiver filled with poplar arrows."

C. 1985

The Sháh then bade the servitors: "Prepare
A place within the pleasance."

Heedfully

Those slaves from Rúm and Turkistán attended.
Twelve hundred Beauties of Khusrau Parwíz
(Thou wouldest have said: "The garden hath not
room,")

Arrived preceded by sunlike Shírín
In height a silver column as she walked.
Gurdyá approached the Sháh and bade a slave
Bring coat of mail and Rúman casque. She quitted
Her seat and came forth with her loins girt up
And spear in hand.¹ That all-accomplished dame
Drew nigh a black steed by the Sháh's command,
Set on the ground the butt-end of her spear,
And vaulted to the saddle swift as wind.
She chose her field of action in the pleasance,
Wheeled her about on all sides right and left,
And pierced the dark clouds with her battle-cries.

¹ Couplet omitted.

She told the Sháh : “ What time I fought Tuwurg
I was an angry Wolf as I am now.”

Shírín said : “ Wilt thou arm thy foes, O king,
For she is thinking of her brother’s death,
And will, I fear, consign thee to the wind ?
Thou wearest but a robe upon the throne
Of gold, and she can reach thee any time ! ”

He laughed and answered : “ Then provoke her
not.”

The moon-faced lady wheeled amid the dust.
She was a heroine in love and war,
And said : “ Would that a foeman of the Sháh’s
Were here before me on the battlefield.
I would unhorse him as I did Tuwurg
Here in the Great King’s presence.”

He was all
Astound, she had such stature, thews, and limbs.
He said to her : “ Thou wilt not have to rail
At fortune. Let me see if thou art quelled
By wine or unaffected.”

Then she took—

That lady-paladin—a goblet filled
With royal wine, which Áhriaman himself
Would have declined, and in the sight of all
Quaffed to the Sháh and drained it at a draught ;
She knocked the dust out of that golden stream !
The Sháh in wonder said : “ O warrior-moon !

C. 1986
I have about the world four generals,
Who have it in command to guard my life.
Each hath twelve thousand men—Íránians
And valiant cavaliers. I have withal
Within my golden bower and room of gems
Twelve thousand slaves, all pure, with torques and
earrings.
Henceforth thou art their overseer for thou
Dost toil and care for what is thine. I wish

To hear no word of them from any one,
Or young or old, save thee."

Gurdyá rejoiced

On hearing this ; the slanders of her foes
Had harmed her not. She swept earth with her face,
And called down blessings on her sovereign's Grace.

§ 49

*How Khusrau Parwíz sent an ill-disposed Marchlord
to Rai and how he oppressed the Folk there*

A long time passed ; meanwhile the monarch's star
Sought only the ascendant, but one night,
As he was drinking wine among his sages,
His magnates and experienced officers,
There was a cup in use among the guests,
Graved with the name Bahrám.¹ The Sháh bade
throw

The cup away whereat they all began
To curse Bahrám, the cup, and him that wrought it.
Thus said the Sháh : " Now let the elephants
Of war tread down the fields and fells of Rai,
Expel the folk and turn it to a waste."

The noble minister addressed him thus :—
" O thou memorial of mighty kings !
Consider that the state of Rai is large,
Not one for elephants to trample on,
For God and all good folk would disapprove."

The king replied : " I want one ill-disposed
And of low birth to act as marchlord there,
One who is coarse of speech and ignorant."

¹ The cup had belonged to, or the name on it suggested, Bahrám Chúbína.

“ Do thou, O king ! ” the minister rejoined,
 “ Charácterize the wretch, and I will seek,
 And bring him, otherwise we have no guide.”

Khusráu Parwíz replied : “ I want a gabbler,
 Ill-starred, red-haired, foul and with nose askew,
 With sallow face, malicious, squat, and soured,
 A coward, vile and gloomy, vengeful, lying,
 Green-eyed and squinting, with projecting teeth,
 And humped like wolf in gait.”

C. 1987

The archimages

Were all amazed that he should speak of such,
 And all made search about the world, amidst
 The cities, and among the great and small.
 One day a man brought one such to the Sháh,¹
 Who said : “ Tell thine ill deeds in fitting terms.”

The man replied : “ I cease not to do ill,
 I have no wisdom and I say one thing
 And do another, and snub all that greet me.
 My stock is lies ; I never help the right ;
 I break my pledge and fling nobility,
 Both root and stem, to earth.”

Khusráu Parwíz

Made answer : “ May thine evil star ne’er change.”

They gave him Rai by patent, so the wretch
 Grew great by turpitude. They gave to him
 Troops that had been dismissed. He left the court,
 Famed for depravity. The miscreant,
 When he arrived at Rai, put off all fear
 Of God, and bade the gutters of the roofs
 Be torn away : this gave him much delight,
 And afterward he had all cats destroyed,
 Which gave great umbrage to the householders.
 Where’er he went he took with him a guide,
 While in the front of them a herald walked,
 Proclaiming : “ If I see a gutter left,

¹ Two couplets omitted.

Or cat within a house, I will set fire
To house and field, and stone the inmates' heads."

He would turn out a place to find one drachm,
And vex its owner. All the people left
Their homes in terror and gave up their lands.
There were no gutters when the rain came down,
No watchman in the city. Through the foul
And ill-conditioned miscreant that came
From court to Rai that city was laid waste.
The sun beat down upon the people's heads,
The place was full of pain and wretchedness,
And not a soul regarded their distress.

§ 50

*How Gurdyá made Sport before Khusráu Parwíz and
how he gave Rai to her*

Thus was it till the month of Farwardín,
And rose-leaves decked the surface of the earth,
Until the clouds' tears grew as large as hail,
And tulips filled the valleys and the plains,
Till all the dales were dappled like a pard,
And earth was coloured like brocade of Rúm.
The chieftains came to sport within the garths,
And to the uplands flocked all sheep and deer.
Khusráu perceived the garden's open gates,
The water-birds disporting on its streams,
And bade the trumpets sound. They carried thither
Jars of perfumes, sat down upon the grass,
Called out for wine and decked their souls with joy.

C. 1988

A man from Rai approached Gurdwí and told
All that had happened. He was grieved at heart,
And sought in his concern a remedy.
He told his sister : "Thou must tell the Sháh.

See if thou canst devise a scheme to make
His heart indifferent in this regard."

Anon Gurdyá produced a kitten, clad
As 'twere a child, upon a courser trapped
With gold and jewels. In the kitten's ears
Were earrings and its claws were tulip-hued,
Its eyes were pitch-like, languishing like those
Of folk bemused, its cheeks were like the Spring.
It rode about the garden like a child
With saddle-flaps of gold. The Sháh laughed out,
And laughter took possession of the court.
"What," said he to Gurdyá, "is thy desire,
My gracious lady?"

That resourceful dame
At once did reverence. "Exalted Sháh!"
She said, "grant Rai to me, be wise again,
Release the hearts of woeful folk from grief,
Recall that wretched mannikin from Rai,
And term him miscreant and malefactor,
For he doth ban the cats and wreck all gutters!"

Khusrau Parwíz laughed out at his wife's words,
And said: "Thou saucy shatterer of hosts!
I give to thee the city and the lands.
Send thither presently some upright man,
And call back that malignant one from Rai,
Like Áhriaman, that loathly infidel."

The lady's fortune waxed continually
Beneath that royal and illustrious Tree.

C. 1989

§ 51

How Khusrau Parwíz portioned out his Realm

Thereafter when the Sháh's hand was extended,
When all folk wished him well, when other kings

Were subject to him, and his other lieges
 Had been enriched, he chose out of Irán
 Four times twelve thousand warlike cavaliers,
 Brave and experienced, oped the ancient hoards
 Filled by Píruz and glorious Kubád,
 Partitioned out the world in four and made
 Appointments to the governments. He sent
 Twelve thousand out of those illustrious men,
 Shrewd cavaliers, deft wielders of the sword,
 Toward the Rúman marches to safe-guard
 That populous and glorious coast that troops
 From Rúm might not attack Irán and lay
 The country waste or any one encroach,
 But be content with his own rank and fortune.
 He chose moreover of the men of name
 Out of Irán twelve thousand warlike horsemen
 That they might march forth to Zábulistán
 (They left a rose-garth for a gloomy land)¹
 And said to them : “ If any one shall turn
 Out of the way, not keeping his own place,
 Restore him to the path with courteousness,
 But in worse cases use the chain and pit.
 Send spies about to keep you well apprised ;
 Ye will have need of outposts day and night,
 And sleep not in your tents without a guard.”

Out of the host he called twelve thousand others,
 All magnates valorous and fond of fight,
 And having given to them much advice
 Dispatched them to the route of the Aláns,
 And charged them with the gate-way of the West²
 So that no enemy might pass thereby.
 He bade the chiefs : “ Be watchful and God guard
 you.”

He chose and sent twelve thousand warriors more,
 Such as were fit, to Khurásán, exhorting,

¹ “ Ce pays à *terre noire*.” Mohl. ² Darband. See Vol. i. p. 16.

And greatly charging : “ From Haitál to Chín
 Let none set foot upon our land save those,
 Devoted and attached to me, that are
 Admitted with my knowledge and command.
 C. 1990 In all the provinces I have full hoards
 Available to all. When ye have need
 Ask and live happy, prudent and secure.”

He oped his treasures’ doors and seeing drachms
 With the inscription of Hurmuzd he wept,
 And gave them to the poor with further gifts
 When they were clothed. Hé cut the heads off all
 The adherents of Bandwí and intimates
 Of foul-mouthed Gustaham who had rejoiced
 O’er his sire’s murder. Having made an end
 Of cursing and revenge he wisely took
 A new departure, portioning in four
 The night and day, which make revolving time.
 At one of these four seasons an archmage
 Of goodly speech attended to inform
 The Sháh about the host and world’s affairs,
 Who, if he noticed anything amiss
 Among the people or the warriors,
 Would ply forthwith the skirt of justice, learn
 The facts, and find a way. Another time
 Was given up to song and minstrelsy,
 And quiet, careless session with his lords
 As mighty men should do. The third was set
 Apart for prayer and praising God, the fourth
 For study of the starry sky above,
 Its character, its nature, and its host.
 The readers of the stars then stood before him
 Because they were his guides to understanding ;
 But during half of this night-period
 He sat among the Idols of Taráz.
 He also made division of each month
 In four parts that life might be pleasurable :

One for the riding-ground, for archery,
 And polo with some noble to record ;
 Or for the chase among the hills and plains
 To keep himself in health, and when he left
 The chase by day or night the affluent
 Would decorate his route. The second part
 Was given up to chess and nard and tales
 Of battle, while the third was for the sages,
 The scribes and story-tellers, who in turn
 Narrated to him stories of the past,
 While in the fourth the Sháh received the envoys
 Of other potentates and wrote his answers
 To those exalted chiefs. With robes of honour
 The envoys, gratified and satisfied,
 Would set forth from the court and journey home.
 On that day too for all the provinces
 He used to write out patents and bestow them
 On all the chiefs. When the New Year began
 At Farwardín, and sunshine in men's hearts
 Relumed the Faith, he laid a treasure by,
 Unknown to all his subjects, secretly.

C. 1991

§ 52

How Shirwí, the Son of Khusráu Parwíz, was born of Maryam with bad Auspices and how Khusráu Parwíz informed Cæsar

When he had reigned five years he had no peer,
 And in the sixth year Cæsar's daughter bare him
 An infant like the moon. 'Twas not the custom
 To give the call to prayers¹ in infants' ears
 If delicately nurtured. Fathers spake

¹ *i.e.* to proclaim loudly.

One name into their ears—a private one¹—
 The other name was publicly announced.
 The Sháh in private called his son Kubád,
 But publicly Shírwí of glorious race.
 When of that night of birth there had elapsed
 Three watches the astrologers approached
 Khusrau Parwíz who asked : “ What have all those
 Who read the stars observed, what will result,
 And what is this young world-lord’s horoscope ? ”

They said : “ Thou canst not scape the sky’s decree.
 The earth will be in turmoil through this child ;
 His army will not bless him. He withal
 Will quit God’s path. What need we further say ? ”

The upshot of their travail and those words
 Unseemly grieved the Sháh’s heart, and he said
 Thus to the sages : “ Take a better view.
 Be careful that ye speak no word thereof
 Before the Iránian chiefs.”

He took good heed
 Of that ill horoscope and laid it up
 When he had sealed it with his royal signet.
 The matter filled him with concern ; he gave
 No audience for a se’nnight and refrained
 From chase and wine. None saw him for a space.
 The chieftains all resorted to the archmage,
 And held discourse at large to ascertain
 What had befallen the illustrious Sháh,
 And why he gave not audience to his lieges.
 C. 1992 The high priest sought the Sháh, on hearing this,
 And told the army’s words. He answered thus :—
 “ Fate troubleth me, and I am all concern
 About the process of the turning sky
 Through what the astrologers have said.”

¹ As a precaution against evil influences. Sometimes children were left un-named for a similar reason. Cf. Vol. i. pp. 8, 177, 179 and CMN, p. 36 *seq.*

He bade

The treasurer : “ Bring forth the painted silk
With script therein.”

The treasurer produced,

The archmage scanned heart-straitened, and was
mute,

But in the end said : “ God is all in all,
For He surpasseth all men’s understanding.

Now if the blindly turning sky presenteth
An altered aspect to the questioner

How can concernment make it turn from ill ?

Why then should any sage suggest such things ?

May naught but joy be thine. Heed not their talk.

We reap as heaven soweth and perforce

Must trust thereto. While heaven itself shall last

At whiles will love and justice and at whiles

Strife and revenge prevail. From it the body

Hath gain and loss. The understanding soul

Is not afraid. The Maker be thy stay

And comforter, and fortune’s head be laid

Upon thy lap.”

Thereat Khusrav Parwíz

Smiled and then gave his mind to other things.

He called a trusty scribe, instructed him

At large, and bade him write to Cæsar thus :—

“ Put on a crown fit for a king to wear,

For in the night Maryam hath borne a son,

Whose like thou ne’er hast seen. He needs must be

Both wise and fortunate, and through his virtues

Both worthy of the throne and bountiful.

So, as I do myself, live happily,

For joy and high estate pertain to thee.”

§ 53

*How Cæsar wrote a Letter to Khusrau Parwiz, sent
Gifts, and asked for the Cross of Christ*

Now Cæsar, when the letter reached him, saw
The superscription of Khusrau Parwiz,
And bade to blow the trumpet at his gate ;
The realm resounded. They adorned the wastes
And ways in honour of Shírwí the son
Of Sháh Khusrau Parwiz ; the voice of minstrels
Rose from the state of Rúm from end to end.
Folk went with many Crosses to the court,
The scent of roses and sweet perfumes rose.
Thus for seven days they joyed with harp and wine
O'er prince Shírwí while Cæsar on the eighth
Bade drivers with their caravans attend.
He loaded up with drachms a hundred camels,
And fifty with dínárs by way of largess,
Two hundred with gold-woven brocade of Rúm,
Thou wouldest have said : " The fabric is all gold,"
With forty golden tables made with feet
Of coral, fitting for the use of kings,
With gold and silver effigies of beasts
With gems for eyes,¹ with robes of beaver-skins,
With silk from Chín, and with a golden laver
Adorned with emeralds. He sent Maryam
A peacock made of gold, and many gems.
He sent as tribute also forty million
Dínárs of Rúm with forty watchful Rúmans
To guard it led by Khánagí—a man
Unmatched in wisdom. Thus with cameleers
Ten caravans went laden with dínárs.

When tidings reached the conquering Sháh : " An
envoy

¹ Cf. Vol. vii. p. 36.

From Cæsar draweth nigh," he bade Farrukh,
 A loyal marchlord, ruler of Nímrúz,
 High-born, a warrior, and the army's Lustre,
 To mount. With him went horsemen of the Sháh
 With golden helms. When Khánagí described
 Those troops afar he boldly rode ahead
 Until they reached the Sháh and that famed court.
 On seeing his fair face and splendid throne
 All louted to the ground and homaged him.
 Then Khánagí, his face in dust, exclaimed :—
 " O lord of justice, holy man ! may God,
 The All-conquering, bless thee, mayst thou ever be
 The Sháh and glad."

The chiefs arose and made
 Room for him near the Sháh to whom he said :—
 " Whose wisdom is like thine ? Thou art more bright
 Than Sol in heaven, more lasting than the soul
 Of eloquence. May this world never lack
 A king like thee, and may time bear him fruit.
 May none behold the day whereon thy will
 Is frustrate ; be thy name writ on the sun.
 May this world never lack thy head and crown,
 This land thy host. From Cæsar salutation,
 From us praise to this famous king of earth.
 May all be dark to one that joyeth not,
 In his alliance. We have come from Rúm
 With gifts and tribute to this famous land,
 Come with philosophers withal lest any
 Should feel aggrieved at us. Let him accept
 From Cæsar goods and tribute and moreover
 His blessing."

Smiled the Sháh upon that man
 Of worship and they set for him a seat.
 Khusráu Parwíz sent to the treasury
 The gifts and said to him : " There needed not
 Such pains ;" then to Kharrád, son of Barzín :—

C. 1994

“ Read out this letter to the company.”

The scribe, an eloquent and heedful man,
 Scanned the address and said : “ 'Tis ' to the great,
 Exalt Khusrau Parwiz, that man of God,
 The watchful ruler of a lovely land,
 Whose crown and wisdom are God's gifts to him,
 The world-lord and the son of Shah Hurmuzd,
 The glory of the crown and throne, from Cæsar,
 The father of the mother of the prince
 Of lion-name,¹ and may his fame and power
 Endure. Be his height, Grace, and victory,
 And may his days be all a New Year's Day.
 May he rule o'er Irán and o'er Túrán,
 In sovereignty without competitor,
 For ever glad in heart and bright in soul,
 For ever old in wit and young in fortune.
 The noble monarchy of Gaiúmart,
 The offspring of Húshang and Tahmúras,
 Sire after sire, son after son, God grant
 The stock ne'er fail. May holy God bless these,
 The Mighty both in kingship and in Faith.
 No horseman and no Spring is like to thee,
 Like thee there is no picture in the halls ;
 Thou hast all manliness and uprightness,
 And may thy spirit look not on defeat.
 In all Irán, Túrán, and Hindústán
 From Turkistán to Rúm, the sorcerers' land,
 God hath giv'n thee high birth with purity :
 No holy mother e'er bare such a son.
 When Farídún gave to Íraj Irán,
 And took supremacy from Rúm and Chín,²
 He from the first acclaimed Íraj and purged
 His heart from guile and gloom. Thou hast no want,

¹ Shírwí (Sherwí) from “ sher,” a lion.

² Rúm and Chín (Túrán) were the portions of Salm and Túr, the elder brothers of Íraj. See Vol. i. p. 189.

Thy fortune prospereth, and thou wouldest say
 That God bestoweth majesty and charm
 And manhood upon thee and robbeth others
 Of their renown for manliness. As patrons
 Of virtue, noble, bountiful, no member
 Of their race e'er saw trouble. Tax and tribute
 They laid on foes, and their ill-wishers bare,
 As oxen do, their burdens. Since the days
 Of Núshírwán (may wisdom make him young
 For evermore !), whose peer hath never been,
 And ne'er will be, as Sháh—the prudent king
 By whom was reared a bulwark from the deep,¹
 So that they freed the whole wood of Nárwan
 From Turkmans and the folk reposed, so freed
 A vast expanse from enemies amid
 The benisons of lords and underlings,
 While Arabs, Indians, and Írániens
 Girt up their loins before him—from the sea
 Of Chín up to the land of the Khazars,
 And from Armenia to the Eastern² gate,
 The nobles of Haitál, Cháh, Turkistán,
 And Samarkand, although possessed of crowns,
 Of Grace and splendour, all have been your lieges
 Admittedly because the Sháhs were sprung
 From Farídún and others had no right.
 By this affinity that I have now
 Contracted with thee, and increased thereby
 My greatness by my wisdom, I rejoice
 As those athirst, or herbs sun-parched, at water.
 Let the shrewd world-lord make me glorious,
 And answer me this day. I ask the king
 To grant a wish of mine. It is a matter
 Of no account to him. Among thy treasures
 There is the Cross of Christ : observe and ye
 Will find it so. It hath been there for long.

C. 1995

¹ See Vol. vii. p. 239.² From Cæsar's point of view.

Now let the Sháh restore it and so doing
 Confer a favour on us great and small ;
 Then all the world will bless him, saying thus :—
 ‘ Let time and earth without him be no more.’
 ‘ Twill be a favour to me ; I will pray
 All day and three fourths of the night for him.
 Let him accept the tribute, toll, and gifts
 Sent by me to his folk, and in return
 I will accept the Cross by way of thanks.
 Ne’er may the wicked look upon thy face !
 Our feasts and ritual will prove glorious,
 Our Faith become resplendent in the world,
 As will our holy day, our Sunday, God
 Will everywhere be worshipped, and the sad
 Will kiss the Cross and burn thereto much incense.
 That time will be delightful to my heart,
 For ye will purge your hearts of all the vengeance
 That hath come down to us from Farídún,
 And privily possessed both Salm and Túr ;
 Our realm will rest from forays and all feuds.
 Our wives and children have been carried off,
 In every way our hearts have been distressed,
 But our affinity hath calmed the world,
 And all insensate passions are appeased.
 May the Creator bless thee and thy land.”

C. 1996

The Sháh heard Cæsar’s letter to the end
 With secret joy ; the days of mighty kings
 Had been restored in him. He gave great praise
 To Khánagí and said : “ Be thou no more
 A stranger.”

They made ready for that worthy,
 That man both shrewd and brave, as dwelling-place
 Two halls delightsome, and provided him
 With all things needful. Khánagí first viewed
 The appointed dwelling, then rejoined the Sháh,
 And companied that worshipper of God

At feast and entertainment, wine and chase.
On this wise with the Sháh a month they spent
In all good fellowship and much content.

§ 54

How Khusrav Parwíz answered Cæsar's Letter and sent Gifts

Khusrav Parwíz wrote when the month had passed
A letter couched in wise and happy terms,
Beginning thus : “ The blessings of the Great
Be on the man who keepeth pure within,
Who seeth God's work both in good and ill,
And feareth none beside but praiseth Him— .
The Master of the sun—who thus sustaineth
The heavenly sphere : and first, thy praises of me,
As instanced in thy letter, I acknowledge,
And I am gratified that they proceed
From sages eminent. I have received
Thy splendid¹ treasure sent and only wish
That thou hadst less concerned thyself. Since God,
The holy Ruler of the world, hath raised
Thy realm o'er Spica, so as to outprize
Hind and Sakláb, Chín and Khazar, what manhood,
What knowledge, virtue, and what Faith are thine,
And with God's blessing ! When I was in trouble
Thou didst assist me and remove my griefs
Most wisely. Now I am more gratified
In thine affinity and virtuous daughter
Than any other chief in child, in land,
And virtuous kin. The other chiefs all turned
Their backs on me and passed me by as vile,

¹ Reading with P.

C. 1997

But thou didst take the place of sire to me,
And more. I recognise that thou hast been
A father noble and benevolent.

Next, what thou sayest of the holy Faith.
About your Sundays, fastings, and thanksgivings,
The scribe hath read to me. The words are both
Apt and acceptable, but still I shame not
For mine old Faith—Húshang's—than which the
world

Hath seen naught better, teaching as it doth
All justice, goodness, reverence, and love,
With observation of the stars of heaven.
Sure am I that God is and ever strive
To follow justice. We do not allow
That God hath any partner, son, and consort.
He is and ever will be manifest,

Not comprehended by our thoughts but still
To me the warrant of His own existence.

Now as for these old tales recalled by thee
About the Cross of Christ : a well based Faith
Hath reason for its guide. Concerning those
Who, as thou say'st, are sad because their Prophet
Was crucified yet call Him 'Son of God,'
And say that on the Cross He laughed, if He
Was son He hath but gone back to his Father ;
Be not concerned about some rotten wood.

If foolish utterances proceed from Cæsar
His letter will be laughed at by the old.

The Cross of Jesus, which Ardshír the Sháh
Put in his treasury, is not worth the pains,
And if I send it from Írán to Rúm
The land will laugh at me, the archimages
Think that I have turned Christian and a priest
Upon Maryam's account ! Demand of me
Whatever else thou wilt : the way is open.
I look with admiration on thy gifts,

For which thou hast encountered so much toil,
And have bestowed them on Shírwí that so
I might inaugurate his treasury.

I am concerned about Írán and Rúm,
My thoughts all night are like a wood, I fear
That when Shírwí is grown mishap will come
Upon both lands. Beginning with great Salm,
Prolonged by that old vengeful Wolf Sikandar,
What with new feuds and old, the whole affair
Will be revived. In all things that thy daughter
Hath said to me know that she hath restored
Thy crown to youth. She is a Christian still,
And heedeth not my words. She is at ease
And joyful, triumphing in this young Tree
Of royalty. The World-lord help thee ever ;
May fortune's head be always on thy lap."

They sealed the letter with the royal signet,
Kharrád, son of Barzín, took charge thereof,
And then they oped the doors of treasure-hoards
Collected by the Sháh for many a day,
And in the first place eight score money-bags,
For coins which Persians call “ paidáwasís,”¹¹
They filled till they were hard as stones with jewels,
Then sealed them tightly. Every bag was worth,
According to the reckoning on the roll,
One hundred thousand drachms. There were besides
Of pieces of brocade from Chín one hundred
And forty thousand, some of cloth of gold
With jewelled patterns, and five hundred pearls
Of purest water and like water-drops,
With eight score jewels like pomegranate-seeds,
Such as a skilful jeweller would prize,
While of the native produce of each land,
Of Hindústán and Chín, Barbar and Misr,
And raiment from Shustar—all that the chiefs

C. 1998

¹ See Vol. vii. p. 95 *note*.

Esteem—he sent three hundred camel-loads
 To noble Cæsar. He gave Khánagí
 A grander robe of honour than he gave
 To strangers or his kin, with garments, steeds,
 Thrones, trappings, and all kinds of noted stuffs.
 In this way too he made up camel-loads,
 Ten out of them consisting of dínárs
 To give to the philosophers of Rúm.
 The embassy went on its way rejoicing,
 While all the mighty men called down upon
 That prowest king of earth their benison.

THE STORY OF KHUSRAU PARWÍZ AND SHÍRÍN

§ 55

The Prelude

Now will I tell again old histories
 About Shírín and Sháh Khusrau Parwíz.
 The book containing them is antiquate,
 But that same story bring I up to date
 To serve as a memorial of the Great.
 Six times ten thousand couplets there will be,
 Well ordered, banishers of misery.
 For thrice a thousand couplets one may look
 In vain as yet in any Persian book,
 And if one were to cancel each false strain
 In sooth five hundred barely would remain.
 That one—a bounteous king and of such worth
 And lustre mid the monarchs of the earth—
 Should disregard these histories is due
 To slanderers and mine ill fortune too.

They envied this my work and with the king
 They have prevailed to spoil my marketing ;
 But when the royal potentate shall read
 My pleasant histories with all good heed
 I shall be gladdened by his treasures here,
 And may no ill from foe approach him near.
 My book may then recall me to his mind,
 The seed of mine endeavours fruitage find.
 Be his the crown and throne while time shall run,
 And may his destiny outshine the sun.
 A rustic minstrel wise and old once said :—
 “ To know is that which giveth man most aid ;
 The tale of grief and joy he needs must tell,
 Taste all the bitter and the salt as well,
 For youths though knowing and of noble birth
 Can only by experience compass worth.”¹

C. 1990

§ 56

*How Khusrau Parwíz loved Shírin, how they parted,
 how he met her again while hunting and sent her
 to his Bower²*

Khusrau Parwíz like other paladins,
 While yet his father lived, was young and bold,
 And had for mate Shírin who was to him
 As his bright eyes. He cared for none beside
 Among the fair and daughters of the night,³
 But parted from her for a while when he
 Came to be king and had to roam the world
 Unrestingly, for all his work was then
 To fight Bahrám Chúbína while the Fair

¹ There is no break in the original here.

² Part of this heading is not in the original.

³ “les filles des grands.” Mohl.

Wept day and night o'er his defect in love.¹

It was so that one day he willed to hunt,
 And all things were prepared as in the times
 Of former Sháhs. They took three hundred steeds,
 Caparisoned with gold, for that famed King,
 While of his loyal servitors there fared
 Afoot a thousand and eight score, and carried
 Two-headed darts. A thousand and two score
 Bare scimitars and wore brocade above
 Their coats of mail. Seven hundred falconers
 Came next with royal falcons, sparrow-hawks,
 And gos-hawks, while behind them mounted men—
 Three hundred keepers of the cheetahs—fared,
 And pards and lions chained three score and ten,
 All harnessed with brocade of Chín, all trained,
 And furnished with gold muzzles. For the deer-hunt
 There were eight hundred hounds with golden leashes.
 Behind them came, to harp on hunting-days,
 Two thousand minstrels all on camel-back,
 And crowned with gold. Five hundred camels went
 Ahead, and 'twas their special task to bear
 The seats, pavilions, and tent-enclosures,
 The tents and shielings for the quadrupeds.
 There were two hundred slaves to kindle censers,
 And to burn aloe-wood and ambergris
 Therein. Before the Sháh two hundred youths
 Of those attending on him went with posies
 Of saffron and narcissus that the scent
 Might meet him from all quarters as he came,
 Preceded by a hundred water-bearers
 To sprinkle all the road, and thou hadst said :—
 “They pour rose-water over ambergris”
 Lest any sudden blast might scatter dust
 Upon that Sháh of glorious lineage.
 Three hundred youthful princes rode with him,

¹ The section in the original ends here.

Arrayed in yellow, red, and violet.
 The king of kings had with him Káwa's standard,
 Wore crown and earrings, royal cloth of gold,
 A golden girdle, armlets, and a torque,
 And jewelled buttons.

Now Shírín, on hearing :—

“ The host, preceded by the mighty Sháh,
 Hath come,” put on a yellow vest musk-scented,
 And made her visage like pomegranate-blooms.
 She wore a red robe of brocade from Rúm
 With patterns jewelled on a ground of gold,
 And placed upon her head a royal crown
 Set with the jewels of a paladin.
 She left her jocund hall, went on the roof,
 And in her day of youth showed naught of joy,
 But waited till Khusrau Parwíz arrived,
 Then let the tear-drops fall upon her cheeks.
 At sight of him she rose, showed all her height,
 And spake to him with sweetness of the past.
 The twin Narcissi bathed the Cercis-bloom,
 The first all languishment, the last all health.
 All tears¹ and beauty, eagerly she cried
 Thus in the olden tongue : “ O Sháh ! Great Lion !
 O framed to be leader of the host !
 O blessed hero, lion-conqueror !
 Where is that love of thine ? Where are the tears
 Of blood once stanchéd by looking on Shírín ?
 Where all those days which once we turned to nights,
 Tears in our hearts and eyes, smiles on our lips ?
 Where are our loves, our troth, our bonds, our oaths ? ”

E'en as she spake she shed blood-drops of gall
 Upon her guise of lapis-lazuli,²
 And when he heard and looked and saw Shírín
 He wept for her, his face hued like the sun.
 He sent a led horse all betrapped with gold,

C. 2001

¹ Or “ sheen.” ² “ sur son visage en deuil.” Mohl.

And forty honest eunuchs, men of Rúm,
To bear her to his golden bower, his house
Begemmed, then went to hunt with hawks and
cheetahs.

When he had had enough of hill and plain
He went back to the city joyfully.

They decked it and the roads because the Sháh
Was coming from the chase ; the trumpet-calls,
And sounds of singing, ravelled all the air,
And thus the royal Fruit of that tall Bough¹
Passed through the city to his lofty home,
While from his bower Shírín came forth and kissed
His feet and hands and head. At that time spake
The Sháh to the high priest : “ Indulge no thoughts
Save good concerning us, bestow on me
This fair-cheeked lady as my lawful wife,
And publish the glad tidings to the world.”

So he espoused her in the ancient way
With all the rites and sanctions of his day.

§ 57

*How the Nobles heard that Shírín had come to the Bower
of Khusrau Parwíz and how they advised him and
were satisfied with his Answer*

Now when these tidings of Khusrau Parwíz
Came to the nobles and the host : “ Shírín
Is in the Sháh’s bower and the old affair
Hath been revived,” the city was aggrieved,
And full of care, distress, and malisons.

For three days none approached him. On the fourth,
When the world’s Lustre shone, he sent and called

¹ The Sásánian race. “ Lorsque cet homme à la stature royale et aux membres puissants.” Mohl.

The chiefs and set them on the nobles' seats.
 He said to them : " For days I have not seen you,
 And grieve thereat. I am concerned for fear
 Of your concernment and solicitous
 About your dealings."

Thus he spake but none
 Replied ; they simply held their tongues, but those
 Aggrieved and angry looked at the high priest,
 Who seeing this rose to his feet and thus
 Addressed Khusrau Parwíz : " O righteous judge !
 Thou hast in youth's day come to be the king,
 Hast seen from fortune much of good and ill,
 And heard how in the world no stint thereof
 Ariseth from the deeds of those in power ;
 How when a noble race hath been defiled
 Defiled too are the mighty sprung therefrom.

Know this, that never hath a noble son
 Laid hands upon his father's life¹ unless
 His mother had befouled the seed and smirched
 Her offspring. Thus Zahhák, the Arab, slew
 His sire and brought ill on Jamshíd's head, thus
 Sikandar, who poured out Dárá's blood, brought
 So great a fire of feud upon ourselves
 Although his father called Dárá his brother,
 While Failakús was wont to call him son.²
 When sire is pure and mother virtueless
 Know that no holy son will come to birth.
 None seeketh for uprightness in perverseness
 If he is fain to fill his sleeves with right.
 Our hearts are sad because a potent dív
 Is now the great king's mate, for had there been
 No other woman in Írán e'en then
 How could Khusrau Parwíz thus honour her ?
 If but Shírín were absent from his bower

C. 2002

¹ Blood in the original.² In this and the preceding line the pronouns refer to Sikandar.

His face would be resplendent everywhere.
Thine ancestors, those wise and upright men,
Ne'er would have thought of this."

When he had spoken
At great length, and the king of kings returned
No answer, he said thus : " At dawn to-morrow
We will assemble here and haply have
The Sháh's reply ; our talk was long to-day."

Next day they rose at dawn and went to offer
Their service to the Sháh, and some one said :—
" It is not right to speak such words," another :—
" The words were wisdom's mates," a third : " He will
Reply to-day, and what he saith should make
For happiness."

The archimages all
Set forward and with stately steps approached
The Sháh. The magnates took their seats and then
A man came with a bowl all furbished bright
As Sol and passed before the chiefs in turn.
Now warm blood had been poured therein. He set
It gently by the Sháh. All turned away
Their faces and the assembly was all talk.
Khusrau Parwíz looked on them and they quaked.
He said to the Írániāns : " Whose blood
Is this and wherefore is it set before me ? "

" 'Tis noisome blood," the archimage replied,
" And so polluteth him that seeth it."

When he had spoken thus men took the bowl,
Passed it from hand to hand, cleansed it of blood,
And scoured it out with water and with sand.
Then when that noisome bowl had been made bright
And clean, the washer filled it full of wine,
And sprinkled it with musk and with rose-water.
The bowl shone out sun-bright. Khusrau Parwíz
Said to the archmage : " Verily the bowl
Appeareth otherwise ! "

The archmage said :—

“ Live ever more ! Good hath appeared from ill.
Thy bidding hath turned Hell to Paradise,
And from ill-doing good is manifest.”

“ Shírín,” Khusrau Parwíz said, “ to this city
Was e'en as this disgustful bowl of bane,
But in my bower she is a bowl of wine,
And savoureth as we. She first obtained
Her ill repute through me ; she did not court
The friendship of the Great.”

• All blessed him, saying :—

“ May earth ne'er lack thy crown and throne. They
grow

In goodness whom thou makest good, and mighty
Are those whom thou hast made so in the world,
For to be Sháh, archmage, and chief is thine,
And have withal on earth the Grace divine.”

§ 58

*How Shírín murdered Maryam and how Khusrau
Parwíz put Shírín in Bonds*

Thenceforth the greatness of the Sháh increased,
And what had been a moon became a sun.
His days were spent with Cæsar's daughter ; she
Was chief within his bower. Because of her
Shírín was sore, her cheeks were ever wan
With envy till at last she gave her bane,
And Cæsar's lovely daughter ceased to be.
None wotted of the trick because Shírín
Kept her own counsel, and Khusrau Parwíz
Gave her the gilded chamber when Maryam
Had been deceased one year.

C. 2004

Now when Shírwí
 Was sixteen years of age, and in his stature
 O'ertopped the men of thirty, his sire brought
 The erudite to educate the prince,
 While by command an archimage maintained
 A kindly watch upon him day and night.
 It happened that the archimage one morn
 Went to his patron's and returning found
 Shírwí as usual occupied in sport,
 Saw that he had in front of him Kalila
 And Dimna¹ but that the fierce youth was holding
 In his left hand a wolf's claw cut and dried,
 And in his right a buffalo's horn, and these
 He beat together as the humour took him.
 Such actions, pastime, and behaviour
 Vexed the archimage's heart who boded ill
 From that wolf's claw, the buffalo's horn, and manners
 Of that rude youth, and was in great concern
 At what might happen through that ill-disposed
 And luckless prince in times to come for he
 Had seen the horoscope and made inquiries
 Of minister and treasurer. He sought
 The high-priest and reported thus to him :—
 “This youth is wholly given up to play.”

The high-priest went at once and told the Sháh,
 Who kept a careful eye upon his son,
 On whose account his ruddy cheeks grew pale
 In trouble for the future of the world.
 His heart was full of pain, his liver ached
 At what the readers of the stars had told him.
 He said : “ I wait the Lord of Heaven's will.”

When twenty-three years of the reign had passed,
 And when Shírwí had gotten stalwart limbs,
 The Great King was displeased because the child
 Was lusty grown but not as he desired.

¹ See Vol. vii. pp. 382, 423.

The monarch's mind, which else had been all smiles,
 Was pained thereat, and he confined the youth
 To his own palace with a foster-brother,
 Disgraced on his account, and all that were
 Attached to him or went to him for counsel :
 There were above three thousand more or less.
 Their palaces, connected each with each,
 Were as a whole the prison of Shírwí.
 They decked, draped, carpeted, and furnished them
 With provand and the means of giving largess,
 With male and female slaves, with wine and minstrels.
 The place was all dínárs. The inmates passed
 Their time in song and feast while forty men
 Kept guard.

And now as episodes recite
 Tales told by men who thought and spake aright.

§ 59

How Khusrau Parwíz made the Throne of Tákdís

Of that throne which thou knowest as Tákdís,
 And which Khusrau Parwíz set up within
 The hippodrome, the origin occurred
 Beneath Zahhák—that loathly infidel—
 For when heroic Farídún came forth,
 And from the Arabs carried off the style
 Of kingship, on Mount Damáwand there dwelt
 A man who was distinguished by the Sháh.
 His name was Jahn, son of Barzín, a power
 Within the realm, and for that Sháh renowned
 He made a throne and studded it with gems,
 So that Sháh Farídún rejoiced o'er him
 When that grand throne was finished, and bestowed
 Drachms thirty thousand with a golden crown,
 And pair of earrings on him, and had written

C. 2005

On his behalf a patent for Sarí,
 And for Ámul. The coast-lands thus assigned
 Resembled Paradise.¹ When Farídún
 Bestowed Írán upon Íraj—the youngest
 Of his illustrious sons—he gave withal
 Three things—this very throne, the ox-head mace
 To serve as his memorial in the world,
 And thirdly what the just Sháh used to term
 “The Seven Founts”—a jewel. When Íraj
 Departed these were left and Minúchihr
 Had joy thereof. Each wearer of the crown
 Made some addition to that throne, and when
 It came to Kai Khusrau, the fortunate,
 He added greatly to its height. It passed
 In due succession to Luhrásp and so
 On to Gushtásp who, when he saw it, cried :—
 “The work of mighty men must not be hidden,”
 And to Jámásp that man of worship said :—
 What canst thou add to this achievement ? Scan
 It everywhere and see what supplement
 Thereto will win us praises after death.”

Jámásp beheld the throne and saw therein
 A key wherewith to open wisdom’s door.
 Upon it he inscribed the heavenly host,
 Which hold the secrets of futurity,
 And there portrayed by order of the Sháh
 The planet-forms from Saturn to the moon.
 The throne thus reached the era of Sikandar,
 Each Sháh that looked upon it adding somewhat—
 Gold, silver, ivory, and ebony—
 Until through ignorance at one fell swoop
 Sikandar broke it up ; howbeit the nobles
 Concealed and handed down full many a shard.
 Thus was it till Ardshír began his reign,
 And then the name e’en had grown obsolete.

¹ Cf. Vol. ii. p. 27.

He found no traces and so made another,
Not as he would, and had small joy therein.
He died and left it as thereafter did
Those that succeeded. When Khusrau Parwíz
Sat on the throne and all the chiefs were loyal
They spake about that other royal throne,
And its past history. Thus said the Sháh :—
“ Ye chiefs ! I ask a favour of my lieges
So that I may remake that throne renowned
To keep my name in mind. I need the plan
Drawn by Jámásp—the favourite of the sky—
The one adopted by Gushtásp, the Sháh,
Assisted by Jámásp’s advice and skill.”

C. 2006

An archimagus reproduced the plan
Whereat the exalt Khusrau Parwíz was glad,
And, this obtained, made haste to reconstruct
With joy the throne, brought forth that of Ardshír,
And gathered all the craftsmen of Írán.
So in the days of that victorious Sháh
They reconstructed that resplendent throne.
The artificers came out of Rúm and Chín,
Makrán, Baghdád, and from Írán itself.
Of craftsmen there were one and sixty score,
Intent upon the fashioning thereof,
And each had thirty workers under him—
Men out of Rúm, Párs, and Baghdád. The Sháh
Commanded all to labour earnestly
To have the throne completed in two years,
And when it was set up high fortune shone.
The height thereof was five score royal cubits¹
If thou wilt add thereto three score and ten ;
The breadth six score for 'twas less broad than high.
A different carpet was laid down each morning
Throughout the month,² and seven score thousand
plaques

¹ A royal cubit=a fathom.² Couplet omitted.

Of gold with patterns fashioned of turquoise
 Were set upon the throne, while every nail
 And clamp were solid silver ; each of them
 Weighed sixty-six miskáls. When Sol displayed
 Its lamp in Aries the desert lay
 Behind the throne which fronted garden-wards,
 But when Sol raged in Leo then the back
 Was turned toward it ;¹ in the month of Tír—
 The time for fruit and festival—the throne
 Stood fronting toward the garden and the fruits
 To catch their scents ; in Winter, in the days
 Of wind and wet, none felt them seated thus ;
 The top was all shut in right royally
 With beaver-skins and sables. A thousand balls
 Withal of gold and silver glowed like brands²
 Upon the fire, each five and twenty score
 Miskáls in weight and coral-hued with heat.

C. 2007

One half was in the fire, the other half
 Was turned towards the noble warriors.
 The host of heaven, planets, Zodiac,
 The bright moon in whatever Sign soe'er,
 And all the bodies, fixed or wandering,
 Were visible to the astronomer,
 Who saw what portion of dark night had passed,
 And how much sky had moved athwart the earth.
 Among these tables some were made of gold,
 And what a wealth of jewels was therein !
 Not e'en an expert could compute their tale.
 The cheapest ran to some three score dínárs
 And ten ; seven hundred would not purchase some,
 So strike an average. Full many a ruby
 Was there whose value none could estimate :
 They lit the night like Venus in the sky.
 Upon the throne-steps were three rows of seats

¹ The sun.² " Les valets de garde-robe faisaient chauffer au feu," etc. Mohl.

Enriched with gems. From one row to the next
 There were four steps of gold inlaid with jewels.
 One row, whose ornaments were shaped like heads
 Of rams, took thence its name ; the next above
 Was known as “Lapis-lazuli” as higher
 Than wind or dust-clouds, while the third was all
 Turquoise, and every one that saw it burned
 With longing. Rural chiefs and underlings
 Sat on the Rams’ Heads’ row while cavaliers—
 Men un-affeared upon the day of battle—
 Sat on the cirque of lapis-lazuli.
 The turquoise seat was for the minister
 That was engaged in governing the realm,
 And he that sat there must be wise and loyal.
 A fabric was spread out of cloth of gold
 Two score and seventeen cubits long, its fringe
 All strung with jewels held by golden threads.
 A map of heaven was inscribed thereon
 Where Saturn, Mars, Sol, Jupiter,¹ and Venus,
 With Mercury and shining Luna, showed
 The fortunes of the Sháh ; there too appeared
 The Seven Climes, and peers of Párs and Rúm ;²
 The seven and forty Sháhs,³ their faces, thrones,
 And crowns, were shown, those of the kings of
 kings,
 Of woven gold. The fabric was unique.
 A man of Chín, unrivalled in such work,
 Had given seven years to weaving it.
 One New Year at Urmuzd of Farwardín
 He came before the monarch of Irán,
 And brought that royal carpet to the Sháh :
 The nobles let him pass. He laid it down
 On New Year’s Day. The Sháh’s joy was complete.

C. 2008

¹ Reading with P.² *Id.*

³ Khusrau Parwiz himself was only the forty-third Sháh. Sháh, however, may be used here in a more general sense so as to embrace Siyáwush, Asfandiyár, and others. Mohl has “quarante-huit.”

That carpet gave an opportunity
For mirth : they called for wine and minstrelsy.

§ 60

*The Story of Sarkash and Bárbad, the Minstrel, and
Khusrau Parwíz*

There was a minstrel who was named Sarkash—
An expert—who acclaimed the king of kings
With all felicitations on the harp,
While nobles showered jewels over him,
And hailed him as the Grace of majesty,
What while the Sháh grew greater year by year.

Now in the nine and twentieth of his kingship,
When none fared ill at court, Bárbad heard tell
Thereof, for all folk said to him : “ The world-lord
Affecteth minstrelsy in private life,
And thou, if thou wert introduced to him,
Wouldst overtop Sarkash.”

Thereat the man
Became ambitious and though well to do
Departed to the Sháh’s court from his province,
And noted all the minstrels there. Sarkash,
On hearing him perform, was vexed at heart,
And, all confounded at such minstrelsy,
Approached the audience-chamberlain, bestowed
A present on him of dínárs and drachms,
And said : “ There is a minstrel at the gate,
Who is my better both in years and skill.
He must not come before Khusrau Parwíz
For I am waxing old and he is young.”

The keeper of the door, on hearing this,
Refused the new musician audience,
And so Bárbad, whenever he approached,

Found his employment and his profit nil.
 When he despaired of being heard he sought
 The royal pleasance with his harp. The gardener,
 A man by name Mardwí, revived his hopes,
 Because at the New Year the Sháh was wont
 To hold a two weeks' feast within that pleasance.
 Bárbad approached Mardwí forthwith, became
 Friends that same day and said : "Thou wouldest say
 That we are soul and body. I desire
 A boon—the merest trifle. When the world-lord
 Shall come to revel hither give to me
 The means of seeing him, myself unseen."¹

Mardwí replied : "I will ; my love for thee
 Shall oust reflection."

C. 2009

When the Sháh took order
 For visiting the garth the gardener's heart
 Was like a shining lamp. He went and told
 Bárbad : "The Sháh is coming to the pleasance."

Bárbad dressed all in green and took his harp,
 Prepared to sing of glory and of war,
 And went to where the Sháh would be who had
 Each Spring a fresh spot for his festival.
 There was a verdant cypress full² of leaf,
 Whose branches, like the battle of Pashan,
 Extended far and wide. With harp on breast
 The minstrel climbed it and abode until
 The king came from his palace to the pleasance :
 The gardener had the spot in readiness.
 There came a fay-faced reveller with wine
 While in the monarch's hand there was a cup ;
 The world-lord took the liquor from the youth ;
 Its crimson made the crystal disappear.
 Now when the sun turned sallow, but abode

¹ Couplet omitted.

² Gashan. Firdausí might have used this adjective as a rhyme-word in his alleged competition with the three poets (see Vol. iii. p. 15) but preferred the more erudite Pashan.

Until night turned to lapis-lazuli,
 The minstrel in that cypress took his harp,
 And sang a royal ditty. In that tree
 He sang a lay so charming that the Sháh,
 That man of wakeful fortune, was amazed.
 The melody which that sweet voice gave forth
 Was that which now thou callest Dádáfríd.¹
 The company were in astonishment,
 And everyone had his own view thereon.
 The playing made Sarkash like one insane ;
 He recognised the source, but held his peace,
 And thought : “ None but Bárbad can play like this,
 Or knoweth thus the song of paladins.”

The Sháh gave orders to his lords : “ Search all
 The pleasure.”

They searched long and came again,
 While shrewd Sarkash observed : “ No marvel 'tis,
 So fortune-favoured is the Sháh, that rose
 And cypress-tree should serve him as musicians.
 For ever may his head and crown endure.”

Then the cup-bearer brought another cup,
 And as the king received it from the youth,
 So fair of face, the minstrel preluded
 In other fashion and forthwith began
 A different song—that called Paikar-i-Gurd,²
 A name suggested by the words. The minstrel
 Sang and the Sháh gave ear, drank to the voice,
 And bade : “ Produce this man and all within
 The garden.”

So they searched the garden through,
 And carried lights beneath the trees, but saw
 Naught but the willows and the cypresses,
 And pheasants pacing underneath the rose.

¹ “ The Source of Justice.”

² “ The Battle of the Brave.” This and the preceding are musical terms.

The king of kings called for another cup,
 And raised his head to hear the voice. Again
 There came the singing to another tune
 Upon the harp—the tune called *Sabz dar sabz*,¹
 A melody employed in magic arts.
 On hearing it Khusrau Parwíz arose,
 And that adorner of the garth demanded
 A cup of wine that held a man.² He drank
 The sparkling wine off at a draught and cried :—
 “ An angel this, all musk and ambergris,
 For if he were a *dív* he would not sing,
 Or know to play the harp !³ Find out the player.
 Search all the garden and the flower-beds
 To left and right, for I will fill his mouth
 And lap with gems, and he shall be chief minstrel.”

Now when the singer heard the monarch’s voice,
 And speech so kind and welcome, he descended
 The branches of the straight-stemmed cypress, fared
 Glad and triumphant, came and laid his face
 Upon the dust. Khusrau Parwíz said : “ Speak.
 What man art thou ? ”

“ O Sháh ! a slave am I,”
 He answered, “ and live only by thy voice.”

He told all that had happened from the first,
 And who had been his friend. The king rejoiced,
 Like roses in the Spring-tide to behold him,
 Then spake thus to Sarkash : “ Unskilful one,
 Like colocynth while he is sugar-like !
 Why didst thou bar his access to me thus ?
 Thy harp is banished from this company.”

Then while Bárbad sang on the monarch quaffed,
 And drained the jewelled cup until his head

¹ “ Green on green,” anticipating Marvell’s “ green thought in a green shade.” Also a musical term.

² See Vol. i. p. 290 *note*.

³ In the earlier parts of the Sháhnáma *dívs* sometimes are represented as being accomplished. See Vol. i. p. 127, Vol. ii. p. 31.

Inclined to sleep, whereat with watered pearls
He filled the singer's mouth. Bárbad became
Chief minstrel and renowned among the great.

The epoch of Bárbad hath past and gone :
May ill be never thy companion,
For since the day will pass alike of chief,
And underling, why should the sage eat grief ?
Full many have gone—both chief and underling—
And I from slumber wish no wakening.
When six and sixty years have passed of life
It is not good for one to be at strife.
When I have ended these my famous lays
The country-side will echo with my praise.
Thenceforth for me not death but life shall last,
For I have flung the seed of words broad-cast,
And all of Faith, of counsel, and sound lore
Will sing my praise when I shall be no more.

§ 61

How Khusrau Parwiz built the Palace¹ of Madá'in

C. 2011 I will retell the tale of Madá'in,
Tell of the palace of Khusrau Parwíz.
A Persian shrewd of heart, o'er whom had passed
Years four times thirty, said : Khusrau Parwíz
Sent men to Rúm, Hind, Chín, and other lands
Inhabited, and from all climes there came
Three thousand famed artificers, of whom
He chose two hundred—masters of their craft,
Who knew the use of bricks and mortar well—
Out of Írán, Ahwáz, and from the Rúmans.
Of these he next chose thirty and from them

¹ City in text.

Two Rúmans and one Persian, from which three
 They chose a Rúman matchless in the world.
 That expert came before Khusrau Parwíz,
 And held discourse of plan and elevation.
 That Rúman worshipful, that scientist
 Surpassed in speech the Persian. Said the Sháh :—
 “Accept this contract at my hands and heed
 These mine instructions : I require a building
 Such that although my sons and race shall dwell
 Therein for many a year it will not fall
 To ruin through the rain or snow or sun.”

The expert undertook the Sháh’s commission,
 And said : “For this thing I am competent.”

Ten royal cubits deep he excavated,
 (A royal cubit is five common ones)¹
 And laid foundations made of stone and mortar
 To form a solid basis. When the walls
 Belonging to the palace had been reared
 He came before the master of the world,
 And said : “Let now the Sháh appoint a man,
 Exceeding wise and well advanced in years,
 And send out to the works this man approved
 Together with some trusty archimates.”

The Sháh appointed men as he was asked,
 Who went and made inspection of the walls.
 The artist brought silk which the company
 Turned to a slender cord by twisting it.
 Then from the wall-top of the royal palace
 He measured to the level of the ground,
 And after measuring the twisted cord
 In presence of the Sháh’s commissioners
 He took it to the royal treasury,
 And having sealed it gave it to the keeper ;
 Then going to the court said to the Sháh :—
 “The palace-walls have risen to the moon,

¹ Reading with P. and T.

C. 2012

But though the Sháh bade : ‘ Haste ! ’ I will not urge
 The work for forty days but let it settle.
 The Sháh selected me, and when the time
 Is ripe the palace-wall shall be as Saturn.
 Let not the Sháh’s wrath aggravate my toils.”

Khusrau Parwíz replied : “ Why askest thou
 Such a delay from me, thou malcontent ?
 Thou must not stop the work but shalt not want
 For gold or silver.”

By the Sháh’s command
 They gave the artist thirty thousand drachms
 Lest he should take it ill. That honest workman
 Knew that experts would blame him when he built
 The palace hastily and, if it fell,
 That he himself would lose his livelihood.
 That night he disappeared ; none saw him more.
 Khusrau Parwíz when told : “ Farghán hath fled,”
 Poured out upon the speaker all his wrath,
 And said : “ How could a dullard give himself
 Such airs before me ? ”

Then he bade : “ Survey
 The work and put in prison all the Rúmans.”

He said moreover : “ Bring artificers,
 And gather mortar, stones, and massive bricks.”

Albeit those that viewed the walls took flight
 Both from the Sháh and realm, and he was forced
 To leave the work alone and turned his thoughts
 Upon Ahwáz if haply he might find
 An architect that such an enterprise
 Might not continue headless very long.

He sought for one for three years but they found
 None of surpassing worth, and people still
 Talked much about the former architect,
 Who in the fourth year reappeared. ~~A man~~
 Of prudence and of Grace divine ~~informed~~
 Khusrau Parwíz and presently the Rúman

Himself came swift as dust.

“Thou criminal !”

The Sháh said, “say what disability
Was in the work to make thee lose both wealth
And Paradise ?”

The Rúman said : “If now
The king will send me with a trusty man
I will explain to him about my doings,
And pardon will ensue on explanation.”

The Sháh dispatched them and they left the palace,
The noble artist and king’s confidant.
The clever Rúman took the measuring-line,
And with the Sháh’s own representative
Tried the wall’s height and found that it had sunk
Seven cubits. Then they carried to the Sháh
The line. The expert’s comrade made report.
The Rúman then spake thus : “If I had carried
The buildings to their height no wall, O Sháh !
No vaulting and no work had stood, and I
Could not have stayed at court.”

C. 2013

Khusrau Parwíz

Saw that he spake, as all should do, the truth,
Freed those in prison, whether ill-disposed
Or innocent, and gave the architect
Ten purses of dínárs and to the imprisoned
Full many a gift. Thus much time passed away.
The Sháh was eager for the work’s completion,
And after seven years it was achieved,
And was approved by wise Khusrau Parwíz,
Who gave the architect much honour, land,
Dínárs and drachms and praise. All went to view
That palace, and the Sháh was wont to spend
His New Year there. None ever saw a structure
Like that or heard from famous architects
Of such. A ring of gold cast for the purpose
Hung from the ceiling of the cupola,

And from the ring a chain of ruddy gold
 With jewelled links. Whene'er the king of kings
 Ascended to his throne of ivory
 They used to hang the crown upon this chain,
 And when he took his seat on New Year's Day
 The nearest were the favoured archimages,
 The next below the chiefs, the mighty men,
 And commissaries, lower down the merchants
 And other traders, lower still the poor,
 And those that laboured for their daily bread,
 And, lowest, many maimed in hand or foot,
 Or cast down mangled at the palace-gate.
 Then from the hall would proclamation come
 That used to stir all hearts : " All ye that are
 The subjects of the monarch of the world !
 Be not heart-darkened and dispirited.
 The cares of all that look up to this height
 Shall end, but look beyond the royal throne,
 And take ye all the lieges in account."

Then no one, whether innocent or not,
 Was still retained in bondage by the Sháh,
 Who used to clothe his prisoners withal
 From head to foot and give to them dínárs
 And gifts of all kinds, while all mendicants
 Within the city that received no share
 On New Year's Day he seated at his gate,
 And flung drachms to them from the treasury.
 Ill-doers used to fear him, drowsiheads
 Grew vigilant while proclamation issued,
 Whenas the time for leaving had arrived :—

" Famed, high-born chiefs ! why seek so for addition ?
 Your first concern should be your health and safety.
 Consider what ye do and ne'er distress
 The diffident, reflect then act, and heed
 The sayings of the wise. Regard inferiors,
 For those of luckless lives demand our tears.

A man may slumber at my very throne
 Unharmed by me if he shall keep the path,
 But those that clutch at others' goods, on all
 That do such things our anger shall befall."

§ 62

*Discourse on the Splendour and Greatness of Khusrau
 Parwíz*

The greatness of the Sháh I next display,
 And give new freshness to a bygone day,
 Such majesty that mid the small and great
 There is no memory of equal state.
 Well may the reader of the roll of kings
 Shake from his skirts all transitory things,
 And well may I too say a word for I
 Am well assured of sages' sympathy.
 Be not at home in this world for its bane
 Is greater than its antidote ; refrain
 From greed and strife ; make not life's stage to be
 Thy home, 'tis but a wayside inn for thee.
 Fare on. Thou agest and the young anon
 Arrive ; this cometh, that one passeth on :
 Awhile they strut or batten and are gone,
 For lion's head and elephant's both must,
 The signal given, come alike to dust.

When thou hast heard from me the wondrous tale
 About Khusrau Parwíz keep it in mind.
 He had such puissance and eminence,
 Such majesty, such Grace, such throne and crown,
 That, though thou ask of experts, thou wilt hear
 Of no one greater. From Túrán and Hind,
 From Chín and Rúm and every peopled clime

They brought him tribute night and day alike—
Boy-slaves and girl-slaves out of every court,
And pearls and gems. His treasures and dínárs
Were infinite ; there was no king like him.
The wingéd eagle, royal falcon, hawk,
Pard, lion, and stream-haunting crocodile
Submitted to him willingly : his mind

C. 2015 Was bright as Sol. The first of all his treasures, Amassed from Chín, Bulghár, from Rúm, and Rús, Was called " 'Arús " ;¹ the next of watered pearls, And in an edifice a bowshot high, Was named " Khazrá "² by chiefs and Arab sages ; The next was known as " Bár "³ and lord and liege Have never looked upon its like ; the next Was great Shádward⁴ which minstrels celebrate ; The next was that which men called " Bág Áwar "⁵ ; They strove to estimate it but they failed. The next whereof thou hearest speak thou callest " Díba-i-Khusraúi,"⁶ and next the famed Hoard of Afrásiyáb ; none hath possessed Its like by sea or land ; another hoard Was that entitled " Súkhta "⁷ and its lustre Illumed the realm. Sarkash was of his minstrels ; So was Bárbad ; that market never failed Khusrau Parwíz, and in his golden bower There were twelve thousand girls like jocund Spring. He had twelve hundred elephants of war ; Thou wouldst have said : " Earth hath not room for them."⁸

The war-steeds in the stables of the king
Were six and forty thousand, while of camels
Red-haired⁸ there were ten thousand, and none
then

¹ The Bride. ² The Green. ³ Perhaps "The Spring . . . (of
⁴ The Throne. ⁵ Khusrau)." Cf. NT, p. 355, note.
⁶ Windfall, *i.e.* composed of jetsam. Cf. ZT, ii. 305.
⁷ Brocade of Khusrau. ⁸ Weighed. ⁹ The best sort.

Possessed one like to them. Twelve thousand more
 Were beasts of burden, sixty-six were swift
 For litter-bearing ; none had seen or heard
 Of such from white-haired veterans. Of troopers
 There were a thousand thousand—men of Rúm,
 Of Chín and Turkistán. He had withal
 Shabdíz, the charger that ne'er failed in fight,
 While in his women's bower there was Shírín
 To add her lustre to his Rosary.

Since he was ruined by a servitor
 Be not solicitous in quest for more,
 But rather choose a life exempt from care
 If thou wouldest have just praises for thy share,
 For good and evil pass away with death,
 And time is counting up our every breath.
 What though thou gainest as thy portion here
 Throne, crown, and treasury, though thy career
 Be ever so laborious, yet at last
 Thy lot among the bricks and dust is cast,
 So sow but seed of good. Khusrau Parwíz
 Should furnish thee with ample instances :
 When thou shalt read the roll 'twill startle thee.
 The famous throne, the seat of sovereignty,
 Might and the diadem of empire,
 Were not sufficient for him but he must
 Raise from Írán and from Túrán the dust !

§ 63

*How Khusrau Parwíz turned from Justice, how the
 Chiefs revolted, and how Guráz called in Cæsar*

The Sháh, who had been just, became unjust,
 Joyed in the injustice of his underlings,

C. 2016

Robbed all men of their goods and stirred up strife
'Twixt man and man. That which had been a
blessing

Turned to a curse because the Ram grew like
A tyrannous Wolf. He undertook new toils,
His one desire was to increase his hoards,
Until the folk, who lacked both bread and water,
And had not e'en their bodies for their own,
Betook them to the country of the foe ;
The oppressed although unwilling left the land.
There was a worthless man by name Guráz,
Through whom the Sháh enjoyed both ease and
pleasure.

He kept a constant surveillance o'er Rúm,
And was dív-headed, tyrannous, accursed.
Now when the once just Sháh became unjust
This man was first to turn against Írán.
Another was the favourite, Farrukhzád ;
None could approach Khusrau Parwíz unless
Through him, and as the king of kings drew near
His end this man too grew corrupt. He came,
This offspring of Ázar Makán, a man
Of louring face and gruff with underlings,
And grew confederate with old Guráz
Till province after province was involved.
Guráz, who was the general, wrote to Cæsar,
And stirred him up to mischief, saying thus :—
“ Arise and seize Írán. I will be first
In aiding thee.”

Then Cæsar mustered troops
For battle, beat the tymbals, paid his host,
And marched like wind toward the Íránian coast.

§ 64

*How Cæsar withdrew through an Expedient of Khusrav
Parwiz and how the Chiefs released Shirwí from Bonds*

The king, on hearing, took this grave case lightly.

He recognised the practice of Guráz

In prompting warlike Cæsar and recalled him, C. 2017

But he excused himself and disregarded

The royal letter, for the villain feared

Khusrav Parwíz, the court, and all the chiefs.

The king of kings sat with the Great and all

That were the men of leading in Írán.

He plunged his heart in thought and sought at large
Among all manner of expedients,

And when a bright thought came to him he wrote

Thus to Guráz : “ I quite approve thy conduct,

And have commended thee before the lords.

This artifice surpasseth all, for thou

Hast caused the fall of Cæsar. When they bring thee

This letter set thy sharpest wits to work,

Wait till I make a move, then move thyself

That Cæsar being placed between our hosts

May have his purpose foiled. We will convey him,

And all his Rúmans, captives to Írán.”

Then from his court he chose one of resource,

Informed and eloquent, as there was need,

And said : “ Convey this letter secretly,

As if thou wert a spy, but so contrive

That Rúmans may observe thee on the road,

Interrogate and carry thee to Cæsar,

Or else before the captain of the host.

He will inquire : ‘ Whence art thou ? Speak.’

Reply :—

‘ A subject and in straits. I have been facing

Toil and the longsome road to bear Guráz
 A letter.' Have this bound to thy right hand,
 And if he take it from thee it is well."

The courier went forth from Khusrau Parwíz,
 And made the letter fast to his right arm.
 A scout descired him as he drew anear,
 And carried him to Cæsar with his head
 All dust, with wan cheeks, and with livid lips.
 Then Cæsar asked : " Where is Khusrau Parwíz ?
 Thou must declare the truth."

The embarrassed liege,
 O'erwhelmed with fear, replied with favour changed.
 Said Cæsar : " Search this wretch malevolent,
 Ill-purposed and ill-faced."

Shrewd, skilful men
 Searched him and took the letter from his arm,
 Then sought a learned chieftain of that march,
 One who could read aright the ancient tongue.
 Now when that scribe had read the letter over
 The monarch's countenance became like pitch,
 And thus he said in private to his troops :—
 " Guráz intended to destroy us all !

C. 2018 The king of kings with countless elephants
 And treasure, and three hundred thousand men,
 Was minded to involve me in his net :
 God grant his heart and policy be darkened ! "

He dropped his purpose and withdrew his host.
 Guráz, informed that Cæsar had returned
 To Rúm, grew pale and sorrowful. He chose
 A horseman from his troops and wrote this letter
 With sighs and loud complainings : " Why is Cæsar
 Displeased with me ? Say wherefore hast thou
 quitted

Irán and made me shift thus for myself ?
 The king of kings, informed of what I did,
 In pain and vengeance is estranged from me."

When Cæsar was aware of this and saw
 That letter he selected from his host
 A noble and dispatched him to Guráz
 In haste to say : " Hath God so furnished thee
 That thou shouldst desolate my crown and throne,
 And burn my troops with fire ? Thy former letter,
 Thou miscreant ! came but to consign to wind
 My treasure, and the purpose was to give me
 Up to Khusrau Parwíz. May good estate
 And greatness ne'er be thine ! Thou shouldst have
 known
 That while they see a Sháh of royal race
 The Iránians will desire no alien,
 None born of Cæsar, none however wise."

Guráz protested unto Cæsar much,
 But failed to gain an access to his ear.
 Khusrau Parwíz then chose as messenger
 A Persian who was learned and eloquent,
 And sent him with this letter to Guráz :—
 "Thou worthless villain, worker for the Dív !
 These many times I summon thee to Court,
 But thou art far from loyalty and right.
 Now all the army that thou hast with thee,
 For many years thy fortune's fosterers,
 Are backing Cæsar both in heart and will,
 And privily are not as they appear.
 Dispatch to me the disaffected rebels."

When this arrived the wary chieftain mused.
 He chose twelve thousand valiant cavaliers,
 And thus addressed them : " Be ye one in heart,
 And heed ye not what any one may say.
 Abide awhile on this side of the stream,
 And hurry not at all upon the march.
 If ye are one in tongue and confidence
 Ye may uproot a mountain."

Young and old

C. 2019

Advanced as far as Khurra-i-Ardshír,¹
 Advanced until they reached the river-bank,
 Expectant of the bidding of the king,
 Who, hearing, was not anxious to behold them,
 But ordered Farrukhzád to go and say :—
 “ Till now ye have been loyal ; wherefore then
 Allowed ye Cæsar to invade us thus ?
 Who hath transgressed the way of God and quitted
 The path of duty and of loyalty ? ”

The faces of the soldiers at that message,
 Sent by Khusrau Parwíz, grew dark with fear.
 None dared to speak but tarried pained and pale.
 The messenger was with Guráz at heart,
 But kept his secret both from wind and dust.
 He then approached the leaders privily,
 And threw some light upon their darkened minds.
 “ Fear not,” he said, “ ye chieftains ! for the Sháh
 Hath not detected you in open fault.
 Be of one heart and tongue, and say to him :—
 ‘ What disaffected person is with us ?
 And if there be one cloak is over all ;
 We stand by one another lustily.’ ”

The chiefs all heard him, understood, rose up,
 And framed their answer on the lines proposed.
 Then Farrukhzád returned like flying dust,
 And told the Sháh their words, who said : “ Go back,
 And say : ‘ Which of you seeketh his own hurt ?
 The man that hath been duped by luckless Cæsar
 With gifts of treasures, weapons, crowns, and thrones,
 That man is guilty in respect to us—
 A traitor to this crown and majesty.
 Dispatch ye to my court without delay
 All that are disaffected in this wise,
 Else all of you that have transgressed shall see

¹ Khurra-i-Ardshír was a district in Párs. Bih-Ardshír (Seleucia) must be meant.

The gibbet and the dungeon.' "

Farrukhzád

Went with these words, and in the soldiers' hearts
 Old grievances revived. None dared to speak,
 But kept a mournful silence. Thereupon
 Spake Farrukhzád and in unseemly words :—
 "In all this young and valiant host I see
 None inefficient ; why then fear the Sháh,
 Whose troops are scattered through the world ? I note
 At court no great man to illuminate
 His star and moon. Despise my words and fear not
 My threats, but curse me and the exalted Sháh."

C. 2020

The hearers knew : "The fortune of the king
 Hath aged," and framed their lips for malisons,
 While Farrukhzád went to Khusrau Parwíz,
 And said : "The troops all stand by one another,
 And if thou sendest me again I fear
 For mine own life."

Khusrau Parwíz perceived :—
 "This knave will cause both blood and tears to
 flow,"
 But fearful of his brother¹ answered not,
 And hid the truth ; for Rustam had revolted
 Where he was stationed with ten thousand swordsmen,
 And holding Farrukhzád disloyal too
 Caused his own soldiers to revolt withal,
 While Farrukhzád was ware too that the Sháh
 Knew him as author of the host's default ;
 So when that malcontent had left the presence
 He dared not to return but kept without,
 And tampered there with all the folk, for ever
 Attempting to pervert them, man by man,
 From their obedience to the Sháh. He told
 Them all and they agreed : "Another Sháh

¹ Rustam, the brother of Farrukhzád not of Khusrau Parwíz as given in the Genealogical Table of the Sásániāns in Vol. vi. p. 3.

Should sit upon the throne for this hath lost
The Grace, the royal usages, and fortune."

There was with Farrukhzad an ancient man,
Skilled in affairs, who said : " The Sháh imputeth
The army's fault to thee. Thou must produce
A new king soon because our fertile land
Is growing waste, its tumult as destructive
As was Píráñ. We needs must ascertain
Which of the Sháh's sons hath most modesty,
And will cause least dispute. He must be seated
Upon the throne as Sháh and o'er his crown
Dínárs be showered. Then we shall fare anew ;
We have drunk bitter and we shall drink sweet,
For since Shírwí,¹ the shrewd and eldest-born,
Is now in prison we shall need no other."

They all agreed thereto. But few elapsed
Of days and nights before Tukhár's host raised
The dust and slighted all the Sháh's affairs.
Then Farrukhzad went out to meet Tukhár
With many troops. They met and much talk passed
In public and in private. Farrukhzad,
Moreover, loosed his tongue and told the ills
Wrought by Khusrau Parwíz. He said : " The host
By valour and by counsel will restore
The sovereignty."

C. 2021

The general replied :—
" I am not one for words but when I come
To battle with my troops I make things strait
For this world's warriors. This king when young
Was loved by chief and paladin, and since
The days of such an one as he grow dark
I would that none should look on crown and throne.
The fatal time was when he grew unjust,
And joyed in the injustice of his slaves."

When Farrukhzad heard this² he chose Tukhár,

¹ Cf. p. 193. ² Reading with P.

And said to him : “ Now go we to the prison,
To those unfortunates, and boldly bear
Shírwí, the brave, the atheling, away.
The captain of the host, whose brain and skin
Thou wilt take sooner, watcheth o'er his prison,
And with six thousand proven cavaliers
Is keeper of those wretched prisoners.”

Tukhár thus answered : “ We have overlooked
This matter of the captain of the host,
For if the fortune of Khusrau Parwíz
Revive there will not be a paladin
Left in Írán, and what with gibbet, bonds,
And dungeon, none will 'scape calamity.”

He spake and urged his charger, speeding like
Ázargashasp, and led his powers to battle.
The captain of the host encountered him
Forthwith. Those famous troops were overthrown,
The captain of the host himself was slain
In fight, the forces of the king were scattered,
The day was one of gloom and all was lost.
By that expedient and in war-array
Tukhár made entry of that narrow prison,
And called exalt Shírwí. The prince replied
Forthwith, well knowing why that chief had come.
His heart throbbed, laughing after care, when he
Beheld that cheerful face, but still he wept,
And asked : “ Where is Khusrau Parwíz ? Is't
thine
To free me ? ”

Said Tukhár : “ As thou'rt a man
Be not perverse, for if thou wilt consent not,
And lettest go this opportunity,
One in sixteen may fail us, but thou hast
Still fifteen brothers left and each deserving
To be the king of kings : the throne of greatness
Would joy in them.”

C. 2022

Shírwí remained in tears
And consternation. Should he quit the prison ?

Now Farrukhzád meanwhile was at the gates,
And suffered none to pass to tell the Sháh,
But acted as sole chamberlain. When Sol
Grew wan of face, and all the lords had gone
To seek repose, he bade the watch or them
That were its officers to fare to court—
That place of happiness and royal ease—
And said : “ Your cry to-night must not be that
Of yesternight : all watchmen every watch
Must in their cries employ the name ‘ Kubád.’ ”

They made reply : “ We will ; we will forget
Khusrau Parwíz.”

So when the night resumed
Its pitch-like robe from city and bázár
Arose the cry : “ For ever live Kubád,
The scion of the great, and may his name
Be promulgated in all the provinces.”

The night was dark ; the monarch of the world
Slept but Shírin beside him was perturbed,
On hearing what the watchman said, and grieved.
Her heart beat fast with care. Roused by her
voice

The Sháh took dudgeon, but she cried : “ O sire !
What shall we do ? How shall we act herein ? ”

He said : “ O moon-face ! why dost chatter so
When I am sleeping ? ”

She replied : “ Give ear,
And listen to the watch.”

He heard ; his cheeks
Became like flowers of fenugreek ; he said :—
“ What time three watches of the night have
passed
Consult the astrologers for when this knave
Was born I named him privily Kubád,

But I have spoken of him as Shírwí,
 And kept his other name concealed. In public
 Shírwí hath always been his name, so why
 Is this vile fellow calling him Kubád ?
 We must depart while it is night toward Chín,
 Máchín or else Makrán, and I will ask
 Faghfúr for troops, and make our way to them
 By some device."

But as his star was dark
 In heaven so on earth his words were wild :
 His scheme of night-departure came to naught.
 He took a hard case easily and told
 Shírín : " The time hath come ; our foes prevent
 Our schemes."

She answered him : " For ever live :
 Far from thee ever be the evil eye.
 Plan in thy wisdom something for thyself :
 Ne'er may the foeman have of thee his will.
 As soon as it is light that ruseful one
 Will turn toward the palace past all doubt."

C. 2023

He called for armour from the treasury—
 Two Indian scimitars and Rúman casque,
 A quiver, arrows, and a golden shield—
 And for a valiant slave who loved the fight.
 He went forth to the garden in the dark,
 What time the crow awakeneth, hung up
 His golden buckler on a bough where none
 Was like to pass and with a heavy sword
 Beneath his knee sat on the flowery sward.

§ 65

How Khusrau Parwiz was taken and how Shirwi sent him to Taisafun

When Sol shot down its rays the enemy—
That doer of dív's work—approached the palace,
And went about it, but that splendid seat
Was void of Sháh. They gave to spoil his treasures,
None recking of his travail, and then all
Withdrew in tears and wroth at fortune's doings.

What of yon swiftly turning sky say we,
Which never resteth from its instancey ?

It giveth unto one the royal crown,
Another to the fishes in the sea.

One man hath head and feet and shoulders bare,
No peace, no food, no shelter anywhere ;

It giveth to another drink of milk
And honey ; furs, brocade, and silks to wear !

Dust and the darkness of the grave await
Them both. To be unborn would best abate

The sage's cares for never to have been
Is better than to be for small and great.

Now for fresh toil upon Khusrau Parwiz
To give reciters novel histories.

The Sháh bode in that mead, a lofty tree
O'ershadowing him. When half the longsome day
Had passed he hungered. Now within the pleasance
There was a man employed who did not know
The king by sight. The Sun-faced bade his slave :—
“Cut off a cantle from this costly belt.”

That cantle had on it five studs of gold
Enriched with jewelry. The king then spake
Thus to the gardener : “These studs will prove
Of use to-day. Go thou to the bázár,

Buy meat and bread, and shun frequented paths.”

Those jewels would have cost a purchaser
Some thirty thousand drachms. Immediately
The gardener sought a baker and asked bread
In change for that gold cantle but the baker
Said : “ I have not its worth and cannot pass it.”

The two conveyed it to a jeweller,
And said : “ Price this according to thy knowledge.”

The expert, when he looked upon the studs,
Said : “ Who will dare to buy, for this should be
Within the treasury of Khusrau Parwíz,
Who hath a hundred new like this each year ?
Whom didst thou steal these jewels from, or didst
Thou cut them off a slave who was asleep ? ”

The three men went to Farrukhzád and took
The jewels, gold and all, and he on seeing
Ran to the new-made king and showed the gems,
And cantle severed from the golden girdle.
Shírwí said to the gardener : “ If thou
Show’st not to me the owner of these jewels
I will behead thee and thy kith and kin
Forthwith.”

“ O Sháh ! ” he answered, “ in the garden
There is a man in armour, bow in hand,
In height a cypress and with cheeks like Spring,
In all points like a king ; he brighteneth
The garden everywhere, and in his mail
Is like the shining sun. His golden shield
Is hanging from a bough. Before him standeth
A slave with loins girt up who cut for him
This jewelled cantle, handed it to me,
And told me : ‘ Hence away and from the market
Buy bread and relish.’ Swift as wind I left him
But now.”

Shírwí knew : “ ’Tis Khusrau Parwíz,
His features are the age’s cynosure,”

And sent three hundred horsemen from the court,
Like rushing wind, down to the river-bank.
Khusrau Parwiz, perceiving them afar,
Grew pale and drew his scimitar, but when
They saw the king of kings they all returned
In tears. They went to Farrukhzad and said :—
“ We are but slaves ; he is Khusrau Parwiz—
A Sháh to whom the evil day is new.
None either in the garden or the fray
Would dare breathe cold on him.”

Then Farrukhzad

Went to the Sháh with troops from court, advanced
Alone and spake at large. Khusrau Parwiz
C. 2025 Gave ear to him. He said : “ If now the Sháh
Will grant me audience, and will excuse
My conduct, I will come and tell the truth
To him but otherwise will hie me home.”

Khusrau Parwiz made answer : “ Say thy say,
For thou art neither friend nor enemy.”

Then said that fluent speaker : “ View the matter
More wisely and assume that thou hast slain
A thousand warriors, yet thou wilt get
Thy fill of fight at last while all Irán
Is hostile to thee, leagued both heart and body
In opposition. Wait the will of heaven :
Perchance these conflicts may result in love.”

“ Yea,” said Khusrau Parwiz, “ 'tis well. What I
Dread are the vile who may approach and treat me
With all indignities if so they will.”

While he was speaking thus to Farrukhzad
His heart was troubled at his agéd fortune
Because astrologers had said to him,
And he had been astonished at their words :—
“ Thy death will come to thee between two heights,
And by a slave's hand in a lonely spot.
One height will be of gold and one of silver,

And thou with broken heart wilt sit between.
Thy heaven will be golden, thine earth iron,
And fortune will be full of enmity.”

He said : “ So now this armour is mine earth,
My golden shield my heaven, and the heights
Are my two treasures within the garden,
Which used to make my heart shine like a lamp.
In sooth my days are coming to an end :
Where is my star that used to light the world ?
Where are the satisfaction and the peace
Of me who had my name inscribed on crowns ? ”

They brought an elephant for him. His soul
Was dark with woe. He mounted, and the troops
Led him away while in the ancient tongue
He cried : “ O treasure ! if thou art my foe
Be not a friend to these mine enemies,
For I am in the hands of Áhriman
To-day. Thou aid’st me not in my distress :
Conceal thyself and show thyself to none.”

Kubád gave orders to his minister :—
“ Remind him not of any evil deed,
But bid them carry him to Taisafún
Away from court with his own counsellor.
There let him bide in peace for many a day
And harmed by none. Let trusty Galínús
Be made his keeper with a thousand horsemen.”

When thus the sky revolved above his head
His reign had lasted eight and thirty years.
It was the day of Dai of month Ázar,
A time for fires and wine and roasted fowls,
When from Khusrau Parwíz the Grace of kingship
Withdrew and he was crownless like a slave.

Kubád acceded and put on the crown,
And sat in peace rejoicing on the throne.
The Íránian troops did homage to the Sháh,
Who gave one year’s pay from the treasury,

And lived but seven months so call him naught,
Or call him Sháh, just as it pleaseth thee.

Such is this tyrant Hostel's wont ! Thou must
Look not upon it with an eye of trust.
Of all things cultivate a generous mood,
And let thy thoughts be ever bent on good.
When thou shalt say : “ The world hath granted me
My wish ” then mark ! that wish will prove to thee
A bond and snare. If so thou canst abstain
From thought of ill and list this sage's strain.
Here will thy soul from every fault be freed
When thou dost rightly both in word and deed.

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